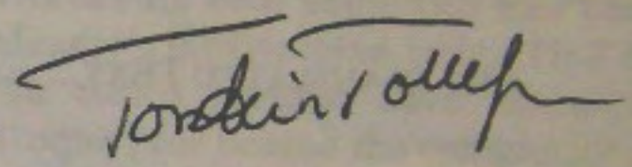
*OF OUR FATHER AMONG THE SAINTS*

*MAXIMUS THE CONFESSOR*

*Translated from the Greek*

*by*



**JOSEPH P. FARRELL**

## *TABLE OF CONTENTS*

PREFACE.....ii

INTRODUCTION.....iii

1. Creation: Man as Microcosm and Mediator.....xvii

2. The Fall of Man into the Dialectic of Oppositions.....xviii

3. The Three Dialectical Principles of Monotheletism.....xxiii

4. The Apokatastasis as Recapitulation.....xxviii

THE TRANSLATED TEXT.....2

## PREFACE

In preparing this translation of *The Disputation with Pyrrhus of Saint Maximus the Confessor*, I have relied solely on the Greek text as found in the Migne Patrologiae Graeco-Latina, Volume 91: 288-353. Where it was necessary to add words to the text I have enclosed them in brackets, []. In some cases, I have added words which, while not strictly necessary, hopefully clarify the meaning of a given sentence. Inasmuch as the *Disputation* constitutes one of the premier christological texts in Patristic literature, I have numbered each paragraph for teachers and students who might wish to use this translation as a basis for their own research.

While I have provided some annotations to the text, I have tried to limit both the number and complexity of these. Almost every phrase of the *Disputation* could be commented upon at length, and I therefore thought it best not to clutter the page with overly technical explanations and references. These, chiefly Marcel Doucet's *Notes sur la Dispute* from his unpublished dissertation, are already well-known to scholars of the Confessor. In my own annotations I have tried to place the text in a more general *dogmatic* context.

This translation, minus introduction and notes, first appeared in 1988 in a series of monthly installments in *The Dawn*, diocesan publication of the Diocese of the South of the Orthodox Church in America, at the encouragement of His Grace Bishop DMITRI. There were some regrettable lacunae in the text which have been corrected here. To those familiar with that translation, or with my earlier work *Free Choice in St. Maximus the Confessor*, will notice that I have chosen to adopt a slightly modified form of King James English for this translation. In the process of revising the translation for publication by the St. Tikhon's Seminary Press, and of revising an earlier and as yet unpublished translation of the complete text of *The Theological and Polemical Works*(*Opuscula Theologica et Polemica*), I concluded that this form of the English was best suited to convey the subtle nuances of St. Maximus' Greek. In his other works, the Confessor, perhaps more than any other Father and master of the spiritual life, also writes to elevate the soul to contemplation of divine mysteries;

his conceptions and sentences are to be lingered over and "inwardly digested", and not merely "read" as if reading a novel. This, too, the King James form of the English is more capable of conveying. By employing it here in the context of an obviously polemical debate I hope to convey the sense that the chief disputants, Patriarch Pyrrhus and St. Maximus, are first and foremost churchmen, hierarch and monk, and that the tone of their dispute, while often heated, does not degenerate to the level of non-technical colloquialisms, but rather preserves its dignity throughout.

To His Grace Bishop KALLISTOS (Ware) once again goes my deepest gratitude for vetting the translation when it was first made. Translation is often a wearying process, and that of checking translations even more so. The result here presented has been through at least five different revisions, and thus if there is any error or infelicity of style, these are wholly my own and not His Grace KALLISTOS', whose suggestions for alternative readings were invariably helpful.

I am grateful also to His Grace Bishop HERMAN of Eastern Pennsylvania and Rector of St. Tikhon's Seminary not only for encouraging me to revise and publish the translations of the *Disputation* and the *Theological and Polemical Works*, but also for allowing me the full measure of editorial freedom and time necessary to do so. It is not often that one has the opportunity to write such works without having to worry about preset editorial limits or deadlines which, more often than not, restrict the benefit that such works might have for the Church.

Finally, to His Grace Bishop DMITRI, Bishop of Dallas and the South, my gratitude for his long friendship and support to me over the years, and for his constant encouragement of this project in particular.

To all of them, may God grant many years!

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## INTRODUCTION

The Disputation with Pyrrhus, like all other works of St. Maximus the Confessor, is centered around the mystery of the Incarnation and enhominization of the only- and eternally begotten Son and Word of the Father. Thus, when approaching the writings of St. Maximus, there is always the possibility to see whatever particular composition which occupies one's attention at the moment as standing at the center of his theological synthesis, and interpreting his other writings from that basis. St. Maximus is consequently often characterized as a systematic thinker, but not a systematic writer. Indeed, no less a man than St. Photius the Great, whose Greek is not without its own subtleties and complexities, complained of the Confessor's labyrinthine style. Had St. Photius known of the word, he would perhaps have characterized the Confessor's style as 'baroque', for behind the complexity and length of his sentences lies the idea of synthesizing several seemingly independent strands of thought into an overarching whole whose center and keystone is Christ Himself, in the hypostatic and personal fulness of the union of His divine and human natures. The Disputation must consequently be read from a broad dogmatic context which takes into account not only his other works, but its significance within the Patristic and dogmatic Tradition of the Church.

At the center of St. Maximus' theological and christological universe is the doctrine of Recapitulation. It is this doctrine which forms the basis of all that the New Testament and the Fathers have to say in connection with the Incarnation. While the term "recapitulation" itself appears only twice in the New Testament, the concept itself occurs repeatedly; one has only to recognize its principles of operation in order to know when it is being applied. These may be categorized as follows: 1) preeminence 2) repetition and recontextualization, 3) reversal, and 4) fulfillment.

The Confessor elegantly summarizes this doctrine and its principles of operation in a compact sentence: "The One Logos is

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The Confessor elegantly summarizes this doctrine and its principles of operation in a compact sentence: "The One Logos is

the many *logoi*, and the many *logoi* are the One Logos."[1] In other words, in His Incarnation and enhominization, Jesus Christ possesses and is all the fulness of the universals common both to deity and humanity. In terms of the four principles enumerated above, then, this works itself out in a multitude of ways. In terms of preeminence, it means that Christ is both the presupposition, the method, the paradigm, and the summit of whatever might be said either about God or about man. God is truly, uniquely, ultimately and finally revealed in The Word Incarnate. And man, perfect humanity, is also only understood properly in its union with the Word. In scriptural terms, Jesus Christ is the Alpha and Omega of all that can be said of God and man, and thus has the preeminence "in all things".[2] Being thus preeminent in all things, Christ becomes the final context, the ultimate and perfect "recontextualization" and repetition, of the *logoi*, understood here as both the words of the Old Testament Scriptures and the principles of nature: of creation as a whole and of man in particular. That is, not only are the typological themes of Scripture repeated in His Incarnate Economy from His conception to His Second Advent, but He also repeats all of the natural stages of humanity itself; Christ recapitulates and summarizes not only sacred history but the history of all of humanity as a whole, and the stages of life of each individual human being in particular. In doing so, He reverses the effects of the Fall. As the Second Adam, the entire drama of the Fall is replayed, this time to an opposite conclusion. Instead of a Fall into passions and corruption, mankind in Christ is raised and exalted. Deification and the spiritual life, in other words, are integral components and implications of the doctrine of Recapitulation. By thus repeating, and in some cases reversing, the typological themes of Holy Scripture and the natural laws and stages of humanity, Christ is not only preeminent in all things, but fulfills all Old Testament prophecy and expectation concerning His Coming, there being nothing more that can be said about them outside of and without reference to Christ.

Consequently, the doctrine of the Recapitulation in Christ bears implications not only for the exegesis and interpretation of

[1] *Ambigua* 7, PG 91: 1081C.

[2] Colossians 1: 18.



Scripture and the understanding of the Incarnation, but implies also a general basis on which to interpret human history and the whole created order and their principles of activity.

At this point, it would be helpful to survey how this doctrine is employed by other Fathers prior to St. Maximus before proceeding to his own use of it. The word 'recapitulation' means 'to collect several different things together under one head', or simply 'to summarize'. It occurs only twice in the New Testament, in Ephesians 1:10 -- "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him" -- and in Romans 13:9 -- "if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." It is significant that St. Paul uses this word so sparingly, and then only in contexts having to do either with christological affirmation or with counsels on living a Christian life. In other words, the doctrinal affirmations of Christology and the principles of the spiritual life go hand in hand, they cannot be divorced from each other. The doctrinal principles of Christology are not mere intellectual constructions which have no force or bearing on the conduct of life, nor are the counsels of a virtuous life in love ever fully apprehended apart from Christ. Love, the union of God and man in Christ and the love of man for God and his neighbor, are the essence of the doctrine.[3] This union was to play an important role in St. Maximus' own theology, as we shall see.

St. Irenaeus of Lyons is the name most often associated with recapitulation.[4] For him, the two natures of Christ along with their

[3] St. Matthew 22: 37-40: "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." cf. St. John 3:16, I St. John 14-16, 23.

[4] This characterization is true as far as it goes, but must not be pressed. As will be shown from a cursory comparison of his writings with those of other Fathers, the four principles of the doctrine are well known to other Fathers, even though they may not use the term 'recapitulation' itself in conjunction with them.

various properties, establish His preeminence in both heavenly and earthly things[5] and thus Christ fulfills them in Himself, i.e., fills them with Himself:

> He was invisible and became visible; incomprehensible and made comprehensible; impassible and made passible; the Word, and made man; consummating all things in himself. That, as in things above the heavens and in the spiritual and invisible world the Word of God is supreme, so in the visible and physical realm he may have pre-eminence, taking to himself the primacy and appointing himself the head of the Church, that he may 'draw all things to himself'(St. John 12:32) in due time.[6]

Here not only is Christ's recapitulation taken to refer to His preeminence in deity and humanity, but, since His divine nature is spiritual and invisible, it also includes "the spiritual and invisible world", the world of the angels and also of man's soul and mind. And by the same token, for St. Irenaeus the fact that Christ's humanity is physical and part of the physical creation, all of "the physical realm" is also effected by His Incarnation.[7] Thus, the "one Christ Jesus our Lord" came "in fulfillment of God's comprehensive design and consummates all things in himself."[8] In other terms, as the Word Himself in conjunction with His everlasting Father created "all things visible and invisible", so His Incarnation effects all things visible and invisible.

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[5] *Against Heresies*, V: 20: 2, citing Ephesians 1:10

[6] Ibid., III: 16: 6.

[7] Ibid., V: 20: 2: "The things in heaven are spiritual, while those on earth constitute the dispensation in human nature. These things, therefore, He recapitulated in Himself: by uniting man to the Spirit, and causing the Spirit to dwell in man..."

[8] Ibid.



The double entendre of the word 'effects' is intentional, for Christ's Incarnate Economy affects all invisible and visible things both in the sense of *accomplishing* and even *causing them to be*, as well as in the sense of *influencing* them. The Recapitulation consequently effects the very design of time and history itself, since it pertains to "the mystery which hath been hid from the generations"[9] of the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."[10] Recapitulation is the christological basis, then, of a proper understanding of the history of creation and of humanity from its inception to its consummation:

> He was incarnate and made Man; and then he summed up in himself the long line of the human race, procuring for us a comprehensive salvation, that we might recover in Christ what in Adam we lost, namely, the state of being in the image and likeness of God.[11]

This constitutes the allegorical or typological[12] basis on which Irenaeus and other Fathers read the Old Testament. On the basis of the Pauline precedent of the parallelism between Adam and Christ, Irenaeus draws further explicit parallels between them: Adam is fashioned of virgin untilled earth, Christ is born of the Virgin Mary.[13] As the Fall occurred through a (fallen) angel, and the disobedience of Eve and Adam, so the restoration is effected not only by a repetition of these elements in the Annunciation by an

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[9] Colossians 1:26.

[10] Revelation 13:8, cf. St. John 1:29, 17:24.

[11] Ibid., III: 18: 1.

[12] There is a measure of disagreement among exegetes whether allegory and typology are the same thing or not. For purposes of this survey, 'typology' is to be understood as a special kind of allegory, with particular rules and paradigms of its own which are discussed briefly above.

[13] Ibid., III: 21: 10.

angel, but by a reversal of disobedience by the obedience of Christ the Second Adam and Mary the Second Eve.[14]

> (This is) the back-reference from Mary to Eve, because what is joined together could not otherwise be put asunder than by *inversion* of the process by which those bonds of union had arisen; so that the former ties be cancelled by the latter, that the latter may set the former again at liberty.[15]

That is, in order for there to be a fulfillment of the Old Testament, their must be a repetition and recontextualization of its themes in the Life of Christ, and where necessary, a reversal of them. This presupposes certain principles in order for typological exegesis to take place. Types are like *leitmotifs* in music; they are repeated, and with each repetition, recontextualized, reaching their fulfillment in Christ.[16]

Not only does this repetitional fulfillment of types occur in reference to the events of the Old Testament, but also in reference to the principle stages of human life itself, i.e., in reference to the observed phenomena of nature:

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[14] cf. III: 21:10.

[15] Ibid., III: 22: 4.

[16] This highlights another principle vital to Recapitulation, that of the unity between the Old and New Testaments. For St. Irenaeus, this principle, and therefore the whole doctrine of Recapitulation, underpins his polemic against the Gnostics and Marcionites, both of which separated the God and Author of the Old Testament, the Creator of matter and hence of evil, from the God of the New Who, being spiritual and therefore good, could not have authored the Old. This dialectical opposition is of course not found in Scripture, since God created all things good, including the material creation. The opposition of the two Testaments shows more the influence of Hellenistic philosophical concepts. St. Irenaeus' recapitulational response which presupposes their unity in Christ would thus seem to weaken the oft-repeated axiom that the Fathers "Hellenized" Christianity.



> Therefore he passed through every stage of life, restoring to each age fellowship with God[17].... He sanctified each stage of life by [making possible] a likeness to himself. He came to save all through his own person: all, that is, who through him are re-born to God: infants, children, boys, young men and old. Therefore he passed through every stage of life. He was made an infant for infants, sanctifying infancy; a child among children, sanctifying childhood, and setting an example of filial affection, of righteousness and of obedience; a young man among young men, becoming an example to them, and sanctifying them to the Lord.... And thus he came even to death, that he might be 'the first-born from the dead, having the pre-eminence among all [or in all things].'[18]

But this recapitulation of humanity is not merely by repetition of its laws and stages, as the reference to Holy Baptism suggests. There is an ecclesiological and sacramental dimension in which it takes place.[19]

With these principles of the doctrine in mind -- the *preeminence* of Christ in all things pertaining to deity and to humanity, and to the invisible and visible worlds, the *repetition* and *fulfillment* in His Incarnate Economy of the laws of human history, collective and individual, as well as of the *repeated typology* of the Old Testament -- we may now see how they operate in two other Fathers writing in entirely different times and for different purposes: St. Athanasius the Great of Alexandria, and St. Ambrose of Milan.

For St. Athanasius as for St. Irenaeus the Incarnation recapitulates all of humanity:

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[17] *Against Heresies*, III: 18: 6.

[18] Ibid., II: 22: 4.

[19] cf. V: 20: 2: "The Church has been planted as a garden in this world."

> Through this union of the immortal Son of God with our human nature, all men were clothed with incorruption in the promise of the resurrection. For the solidarity of mankind is such that, by virtue of the Word's indwelling in a single human body, the corruption which goes with death has lost its power over all.[20]

That is, in His human nature which is consubstantial with all men, the Son and Word effectively bestows incorruption, with a certain irresistible determination, on all of humanity.

In the rest of the created order, St. Athanasius like St. Irenaeus sees that the salient events of the Incarnate life of Christ have the result of effecting and filling all of Creation, being above by virtue of His coming down from heaven and His bodily Ascension and return there, being present in this world in virtue of His Incarnation in it, and below it in virtue of His Descent into Hades prior to the Resurrection: "The Self-revealing of the word is in every dimension -- above, in creation; below, in the Incarnation; in the depth, in Hades; in the breath, throughout the world. All things have been filled with the knowledge of God."[21] Thus thus the sensible world itself, in virtue of the Word becoming man, has been made the vehicle of the knowledge of the Word, because "He, as Man," centers "their senses on Himself."[22]

Consequently, there is a preeminence of the Word over and in all things of creation, inasmuch as He during His Incarnation as man never ceases His proper divine activity of providentially ordering all of creation:

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[20]St. Athanasius, *On the Incarnation of the Word of God*, II: 9, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, p. 35.

[21]Ibid., III: 16, p. 44.

[22]Ibid.



> The Word was not hedged in by His body, nor did His presence in the body prevent His being present elsewhere as well. When He moved His body He did not cease also to direct the universe by His Mind and might. No. The marvellous truth is, that being the Word, so far from being Himself contained by anything, He actually contained all things Himself.... As with the whole, so also is it with the part. Existing in a human body, to which He Himself gives life, He is still Source of life to all the universe, present in every part of it, yet outside the whole; and He is revealed both through the works of His body and through His activity in the world. It is, indeed, the function of soul to behold things that are outside the body, but it cannot energize or move them.... With the Word of God in His human nature.... His body was not for Him a limitation, but an instrument, so that He was both in it and in all things, and outside all things, resting in the Father alone. At one and the same time - this is the wonder - as Man He was living a human life, and as Word He was sustaining the life of the universe, and as Son He was in constant union with the Father.

This recalls once again the statement of St. Maximus, the Word in His Incarnation is the Logos of all *logoi*, the Principle of all principles of deity and of humanity, of all spiritual and sensible worlds.

The miracles consequently reflect in miniature this principle of Christ's preeminence over creation, since each miracle reflects creation.

> "Consider the miracle at Cana. Would not anyone who saw the substance of water transmuted into wine understand that He Who did it was the Lord and Maker of the water that He changed? It was for the same reason that He walked on the sea as on dry land -- to prove to the onlookers that He had mastery over all. And the feeding of the multitude, when He made little into much, so that from five loaves five thousand mouths were filled -- did not that prove Him none other than the very Lord Whose Mind is over all?"[23]

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[23]Ibid., III: 18, p. 47.

Thus "every miracle exhibits the character of the Incarnation."[24] The miracles then reflect and recapitulate the created order. They express "not simply a god, but God: that which mis outside Nature, not as a foreigner, but as her sovereign."[25] The Word, being in the bosom of the Father before the foundation of the world,[26] makes a little bread "into much bread. The Son will do nothing but what he sees the Father do. There is, so to speak, a family *style*."[27] Fulfillment of the created order thus provides the basis from which to understand Christ's miracles properly; they, too, are repetitions of the typologies to be found in the created sensible world.

In St. Ambrose of Milan, this typological recapitulation is also made the basis for a correct understanding of the sacraments. Working through the connection in Scripture between water and the Spirit, he begins, like St. Athanasius, with the general principle that the Incarnation recapitulates invisible and sensible things:

> First of all, the Apostle taught you that those things are not to be considered "which we see, but the things which are not seen, for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."[28] For you read elsewhere: "That the invisible things of God, since the creation of the world, are understood through those things which have been made; His eternal power and also His Godhead are estimated by His works."[29] Wherefore also the Lord Himself says: "if ye believe not Me, believe at least the works."[30]

This is made the basis of his exegesis of the whole typology of water and the Spirit, beginning with the Creation of the world itself. "How ancient is the mystery pre-figured even in the origin of the world itself. In the very beginning, when God made the heaven and the earth, 'the Spirit,' it is said, 'moved upon the waters.'"[31] With this principle in hand, he follows the typology through the Old Testament, beginning with the Flood:

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[24] C. S.. Lewis, "The Grand Miracle" in *God in the Dock*, p. 81.

[25] C. S. Lewis, "Miracles" in *God in the Dock*, p. 32.

[26] cf. St. John 17: 5, 24; 8:58; 1: 1-3.

[27] C. S.. Lewis, "Miracles", p. 30, citing St. John 5: 19.



[28] I Corinthians 5: 18..

[29] Romans 1: 20. Notably, St. Ambrose's use of this verse contrasts rather dramatically with that of the Latin Scholastics for whom it is taken to refer to the program of natural theology, that is, of philosophical explanations designed to prove the existence of God apart from, and prior to, Christology. For St. Ambrose, the verse is understood recapitulationally, as being indicative of the whole typological principle which is to be employed in scriptural exegesis.

[30] St. John 10: 38.

[31] St. Ambrose of Milan, *On the Mysteries*, III: 9, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Second Series, Volume X, p. 318. Citing Genesis 1: 2.

> God, willing to restore what was lacking, sent the flood and bade just Noah go up into the ark. And he, after having, as the flood was passing off, sent forth first a raven which did not return, sent forth a dove which is said to have returned with an olive twig. You see the water, you see the wood [of the ark], you see the dove, and do you hesitate as to the mystery?[32]

Ambrose then provides the answer to his question.

> The water, then, is that in which the flesh is dipped, that all carnal sin may be washed away. All wickedness is there buried. The wood is that on which the Lord Jesus was fastened when He suffered for us. The dove is that in the form of which the Holy Spirit descended, as you have read in the New Testament.'[33]

Following St. Paul, he discovers the repetition of the themes of water and the presence of God again at the Exodus:

> There is also a third testimony, as the apostle teaches us: 'For all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and were all baptized to Moses in the cloud and in the sea.' And further, Moses himself says in his song: 'thou sentest Thy Spirit, and the sea covered them.' You observe that even then holy baptism was prefigured in that passage of the Hebrews, wherein the Egyptian perished, the Hebrew escaped.[34]

Interpreting the cloud, St. Ambrose comes finally to root Baptism in the virginal Conception and Nativity of Christ.

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[32]Ibid., III: 10, p. 318. St. Ambrose' rhetorical question is reminiscent of Christ's words to Nicodemus at the end of St. John 3: 1-10. After a prolonged reiteration of the typological connection of water and the Spirit, Christ asks "art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?"(v. 10)

[33]Ibid., III: 11, p. 318.

[34]Ibid., III: 12, p. 318.



> You hear that our fathers were under the cloud and that a kindly cloud, which cooled the heat of the carnal passions. That kindly cloud overshadows those whom the Holy Spirit visits. At last it came upon the Virgin Mary, and the Power of the Highest overshadowed her when she conceived Redemption for the race of men.[35]

This is a suggestive passage, for St. Ambrose seems to imply that the Holy Spirit overshadows the very waters of her womb.

These considerations lead St. Ambrose to summarize the principle with which he began in terms of a general sacramental formula:

> Therefore read that the three witnesses in baptism, the water, the blood, and the Spirit, are one, for if you take away one of these, the Sacrament of Baptism does not exist. For what is water without the cross of Christ? A common element, without any sacramental effect. Nor, again, is there the Sacrament of Regeneration without water: 'For except a man be born again of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.'[36]

As with St. Irenaeus, there is an ecclesiological and sacramental dimension to the doctrine of Recapitulation. Baptism is an essential component of the mystery and for the spiritual life, since the believer must recapitulate that which Christ Himself fulfilled and repeated in His own Recapitulation. As was the case with Sts. Irenaeus and Athanasius, one cannot separate the divine and invisible nature from the works which He does in His human and visible nature, and therefore one cannot separate water and the

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[35]Ibid., III: 13, p. 318, citing St. Luke 1: 35.

[36]Ibid., IV; 20, p. 319.

Spirit into two separate baptisms or events, as this would be a kind of sacramental Nestorianism.[37]

To summarize, the doctrine of recapitulation combines several different principles. By maintaining that the Incarnate Economy unites in an indivisible and unconfused union all that can be said about deity and humanity and about the invisible and sensible world, it confesses the preeminence of Christ in all things. By maintaining that Christ, in the events and miracles of His Incarnate life, repeats and fulfills the laws not only of creation but of the sacred history of the Old Testament, it implies a christocentricity to history. It thus has the most profound implications not only for the exegesis of the words and events of Holy Scripture, but also implies that any doctrine of Providence, that is to say, of predestination and free choice of will, in order to remain uniquely Christian, must be understood at the outset as being grounded in the Mystery of Christ. Finally, the doctrine of recapitulation also implies a certain vision of ecclesiology, the sacraments, and the spiritual life, for these in turn are recapitulations of the Life of Christ. Each of these principles are traced out by St. Maximus in even more precise ways and with a rigorous attention to their interrelationships. These principles and relationships, in turn, form the background to a proper understanding of *The Disputation with Pyrrhus*, and it is to them that our attention must now be given.

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[37]This point cannot be lingered over too long, since many Evangelical Christians make just such a separation. For the Fathers, such a separation always indicates a distorted and incorrect understanding of the Incarnation. It is on the christological basis of recapitulation that infants are baptized, since not to baptize them until they reach an "age of reason" or "accountability" implies that communion between God and man is impossible at this stage of life. If this principle were pressed into the Incarnation itself, it would mean that Christ only became God *subsequently* to His conception. Likewise, the Church's condemnation of abortion is rooted in the recapitulational principle, since this stage of human life was united indivisibly and unconfusedly with God the Word. It is therefore contradictory to maintain at one and the same time that infants cannot be baptized, and yet to argue against abortion on the basis of the an abstract principle of the "sanctity of life" divorced from its christological basis.



## Creation: Man as Microcosm and Mediator

Central to the Confessor's doctrine of Creation is his anthropology of man as a microcosm and mediator. Man, being created in the image and likeness of God is in the image of the Trinity, and more specifically of Christ. That is, the same theological distinctions of Nature and Law of Existence and of Person and Mode of Existence which were developed by the Cappadocians apply to man as well. Human nature as its own proper principle(*logos*) or law of existence. All its motions, operations and choices, begun by God, are to end in Him. Moreover, man is a microcosm or "small universe" in that all the basic distinctions of the created order are mirrored in man's own being and essence. Being by nature possessed of both soul and body man unites in himself the intelligible and sensible worlds. This conception is mirrored by the Confessor's recapitulational perspective on Christ, Who in His work of reintegrating the original constitution of man becomes the "makanthropos" or "great man" in the sense of being the proper consummation of all men.

Thus there are five basic distinctions in St. Maximus' cosmology, each of which in turn forms the basis for his understanding of Christ's work of recapitulation. These are 1) the distinction between Uncreate and created being; 2) the distinction between intelligible and sensible being mentioned above; 3) the distinction within the sensible creation between heaven and earth; 4) the distinction on earth between paradise and the world of men; and finally 5) the distinction in humanity between man and woman, the masculine and the feminine.[38] These distinctions are in and of themselves good, but become dialectically opposed by man's Fall.

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[38]cf. Lars Thunberg, *Man and the Cosmos*, p. 80.

## 2. The Fall of Man into the Dialectic of Oppositions

Since he is created in the image and likeness of God, a proper understanding of man requires two terms of reference: nature and person. Man by nature has soul, reason, activity(or energy), and the faculty of will and free choice. But the individual hypostasis particularizes or enhypostasizes each of these things in an irreducibly unique personal manner. This unique mode of existence becomes personally opposed to the principle of nature at the Fall, and the five distinctions mentioned above are rendered by man as oppositions, which begin to tear apart from each other and to introduce death, beginning with the first and most crucial distinction between the Uncreate and the created. Maximus expresses this Fall into dialectical opposition and death by a lengthy consideration on the meaning of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil in Genesis 2:17:

> The tree of life is altogether productive of life, but the other is not the tree of life, being clearly productive of death. And that which is not productive of life is [for that reason] not called the tree of life; but since it is clearly productive of death, it is logically distinguished by opposition to [the tree] of life.
>
> But as wisdom, the tree of life also hath a great difference from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, since it is neither wisdom nor respecting of the law. For of [the tree of life] cometh that wisdom proper to intellect and reason, but of [the tree of the knowledge of good and evil] cometh that knowledge of opposition which is a habit of opposing things, which is proper to the irrational and sensible.... The tree of life is, according to one interpretation, the intellect of the soul, in which wisdom exists; but the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is the sensory perception of the body, in which an irrational motion existeth....



> Now the intellect for its part hath the power to discern between intelligible and sensible and between temporal and eternal things... The sensory perception, however, hath the power of discernment of the body of pleasure and pain. It is a power existing in rationally animated and sensible bodies, being attracted to [pleasure] and drawing back [from pain]. Therefore, if man causes to subsist only that sensory perception of pleasure and pain which is proper to bodies by transgressing the divine commandment, then he eateth of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, that is, of the irrationality which belongeth to sensory perception, having only that component of the power of discernment proper to bodies, by means of which he holdeth fast to the good of pleasure, and shunneth the evil of pain. But if by the altogether intellectual power of discernment, distinguishing temporal things from the eternal, he keepeth the divine commandment, then he eateth the tree of life....
>
> Great indeed, therefore, is the difference between the two trees, both as regarding their natural powers of discernment as well as of the name attached to each. Since [the tree of the knowledge of good and evil] is so designated without any designation of distinct good and evil, one who is not wisely and accurately conversant with the *logoi* of the Spirit will be liable to commit great error, for they that are being made wise through grace know that what is called the simple evil is not altogether evil, but evil in relation to some end, but the relation to some end is not evil. In a similar way as well that which is called the simple good is not always good, but good in relation to some end, but the relation to some end is not [necessarily] good.[39]

In other words, there is no such thing as an evil which has substantial and independent existence; there is no basic cosmological and metaphysical opposition between good and evil. Rather, by making the sensible form of knowledge the sole basis of his reasoning faculty at the Fall, man is doomed to make choices on his own, never knowing with certitude that any given choice -- St.

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[39] *Thal.*412B-413B.

Maximus' "good in relation to some particular end" -- will have a good issue. Thus the Fall is not only a Fall into dialectic, but it also introduces a kind of knowledge foreign to the original divine plan, a knowledge based on habit and therefore upon experience. Whereas before the Fall man's intellect was still finite, and thus there was a kind of "ignorance" due to the limitations of his natural reason, after the Fall there is a new "habitual" and personal mode of the existence of this limitation. There is now an ignorance of whether or not individual acts will end in a good or an evil result.

> So then gnomic is nothing else than an act of willing in a particular way, in relation to some real or assumed good.[40]

> We deliberate about things within our own power, and which may be brought to pass by our abilities, and which have an unknown end.[41]

It is to this latter kind of ignorance that St. Maximus refers in The Disputation:

[40] *Disputation with Pyrrhus*, 85.

[41] *Opusculum Theologicum et Polemicum* 1, PG 91: 16D. cf. the whole discussion on pp. 102-103 of my *Free Choice in St. Maximus the Confessor*.



> Thus, those who say that there is a gnomic in Christ, as this inquiry is demonstrating, are maintaining that He is a mere man, deliberating in a manner like unto us, having ignorance, doubt and opposition, since one only deliberates about something which is doubtful, not concerning what is free of doubt. By nature we have an appetite simply for what by nature is good, but we gain experience of the goal in a particular way, through inquiry and counsel. Because of this, then, the gnomic will is fitly ascribed to us, being a mode of the employment [of the will], and not a principle of nature, otherwise nature [itself] would change innumerable times. But the humanity of Christ doth not simply subsist [in a manner] similar to us, but divinely, for He Who appeared in the flesh for our sakes was God. It is thus not possible to say that Christ had a gnomic will.[42]

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What the Confessor means to exclude in this passage is that fallen mode of willing which must be formed by experience and which can only be proper to the human created hypostasis. If the hesitancy of Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane indicated that kind of hesitation then this would mean His mode of willing was gnomic and created, which would deny the Incarnation and make Him a "mere man."[43]

That this is the meaning of St. Maximus, however, can only be made clear by examining what he says in connection to the natural powers and activities of the human soul when willing:

[42] *Disputation with Pyrrhus*, 87.

[43] In paragraph 25 of the Disputation, the Confessor is very clear in enumerating "deliberation" among the natural processes of the faculty of will of the human nature. Again, it must be continually born in mind the distinction he makes between that deliberation which is natural and proper to man, and that "ignorance" which results from the Fall. There is a kind of "ignorant certitude" to the former which reduces to mere ignorance in the latter.

> The things that exist came to be out of nothing, and have therefore a power that impels them to hold fast to existence, and not to non-existence, which [power] is simultaneously an inclination towards that which naturally maintaineth them in existence, and a drawing back from things destructive [to their existence]. Consequently, the super-essential Word, by virtue of His humanity, had of His humanity this self-preserving power which clingeth to existence. And [in fact], He exhibited both [aspects of this power], willing the inclination and the drawing back on account of His [human] energy. He exhibited the inclination to cling to existence in the natural and innocent use [He made] of a great many things, and the drawing back at the time of the Passion, when He drew back from the voluntary death. How doth the Church of God do anything absurd if She confess that, along with His human and created nature, there existed in Him those principles inserted creatively in that nature by him, without which that nature could not exist?[44]

Thus the hesitation of Christ in Gethsemane of accepting the cup of the Passion is not a manifestation of the opposition of divine and human wills, but a manifestation of their proper and natural functioning, a functioning which was distorted at the Fall into a dialectical opposition between pleasure and pain.

As a consequence, even Christ's fear of the Passion is to be interpreted in a manner condign to the union of human nature with the Word. The fear is real and really human, but its enhypostasization in the Word of God makes it something far more than that fear which particularizes itself only in a created hypostasis:

[44] *Disputation with Pyrrhus.*, 33.



> Thus, He was truly afraid, not as we are, but in a mode surpassing us. To put it concisely: all things that are natural in Christ have both the rational principle proper to human nature, but a super-natural mode of existence, in order that both the [human] nature, by means of its rational principle, and the Economy, by means of its super-natural mode of existence, might be believed.[45]

One must recall at this point that a similar principle was stated by St. Athanasius in his own consideration of the recapitulational principle of the Incarnation.

It is this fact of the super-natural mode of existence of the natural properties of humanity that allows St. Maximus to avoid the Aphthartodoketic tendency of Monophysitism. For them the Passion would not have been truly voluntary unless Christ's humanity did not inherit the corruption from Adam. For St. Maximus, the opposite holds true. Distinguishing as he does between the natural principles of human existence and the gnomic distortion of their mode of existence which results from the Fall, the Passion would not have been truly human nor voluntary if Aphthartodoketism were true. By rooting sinful oppositions solely within the created human mode of the existence of the will, it is possible for Christ to be consubstantial with Adam's humanity and yet be without any sin, since the mode of human existence in Him is super-natural.

Thus Christ's hesitation is to be strictly distinguished from that ignorance which results from the Fall into dialectic, for the goal of the Incarnation is precisely to save and restore the human nature to its proper relationship with God.

### 3. The Three Dialectical Principles of Monotheletism

Before proceeding with an examination of the Three Dialectical Principles of Monotheletism and the Confessor's

[45] Ibid., 35.

response to them, it would perhaps be beneficial to survey the manner in which the two christological heresies of Monophysitism and Nestorianism relate to the question of the will and how they answer certain questions. These questions may be summarized as follows: 1) In what is the will rooted? 2) What is the number of will or wills? 3) What is the principle emphasis or aspect of the will which is view in each system when considering the Incarnation, the unity or the distinction? 4) How does each system construe the principle of opposition? and finally 5) what are the implications of this opposition?

Monophysitism and Nestorianism both answer that the will is rooted in personal agency, but for Monophysitism there is only one will since there is only one person. For Nestorianism on the other hand, there are two wills because there are two persons(*prosopa*) in the union. After the union, however, Nestorianism maintains that there is one will.

These points allow one to see what aspect of the will is being emphasized. For the Monophysites, this emphasis would appear to be placed on the will as a faculty, for after the union this one will has two different "manifestations" (*apotelesmata*), a choice of terminology which suggests that the manifestations of what are united are less real than the union itself. For the Nestorians, however, the one will or aspect(*prosopon*) which resulted from the union would suggest that what is principally in view is the will understood as an object of will, in this case, man's salvation, there being two underlying faculties of will which "contract" with each other with that object of will in view. Consequently, the emphases of the two systems are radically different. For Monophysitism, the union itself is paramount, for Nestorianism, the things which are united are paramount. In each system, therefore, there would appear to be a subtle but nevertheless real implication of a fundamental opposition between the divine and human natures, since Monophysitism naturally develops the further doctrine of Aphthartodoketism, which would appear to deny any real role for human free choice, and Nestorianism asserts that the voluntary and countractual basis of the union is the sole means by which it is to be distinguished from the essential union of the Trinity on the on hand and the natural union of the body and soul in man on the other.



Monotheletism reduces these principles into three rather compact statements, each implying a more fundamental underlying dialectical problem which the Confessor is always quick to drive to an heretical *reductio ad absurdum*. The first of these is that The Will is Hypostatic, that is, that it is rooted in hypostasis, and not in nature: "If Christ be one person, then He willed as one person. And if He willed as one person, then doubtless He hath one will, and not two."[46] St. Maximus reduces this principle to two alternative Trinitarian heresies:

> If one suggests that a "willer" is implied in the notion of the will, then by the exact inversion of this principle of reasoning, a will is implied in the notion of a "willer". Thus, wilt thou say that because of the one will of the superessential Godhead there is only one hypostasis, as did Sabellius, or that because there are three hypostases there are also three wills, and because of this, three natures as well, since the canons and definitions of the Fathers say that the distinction of wills implieth a distinction of natures? So said Arius![47]

To maintain three wills because of the distinction of hypostases, in other words, implied a polytheism on the one hand, and also Arianism, since insofar as Christ had only one will and did manifest any of the characteristics of the human will, He was therefore less than fully God.

The second principle of Monotheletism is the dialectical counterpart of the first, and that is that What is Natural is Compelled: "If thou sayest that the will is natural, and if what is natural be compelled, and if thou sayest that the wills in Christ are natural, thou dost in fact take away all His voluntary motion."[48] For Maximus, this implies a return to The Origenist Problematic, for it would make any natural property of God a limiting definition of His essence.

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[46]Ibid., 10.

[47]Ibid., 15.

[48]Ibid., 24.

> [If one were to continue in this line of reasoning, then] God, Who is by nature good, and by nature Creator, must of necessity be [not only] God and good, but also Creator. To think, much less to speak, in this manner is blasphemous. Who then attributes necessity to God?[49]

There is another element to this aspect of St. Maximus' argument. Origen could only have formulated his problematic on the basis of a definition of the simplicity of the divine essence, where the being, activity, and will of God were all wholly identical. Thus, for Origen,

> We can therefore imagine no moment whatever when that power was not engaged in acts of well-doing. Whence it follows that there always existed objects of this well-doing, namely, God's works or creatures, and that God, in the power of his providence, was always dispensing his blessings among them by doing good in accordance with their condition and deserts. It follows plainly from this, that at no time whatever was God not Creator, nor Benefactor, nor Providence.[50]

Thus, there is no distinction between God's faculty of will, in other words, that natural property of His essence which allows Him to be the Creator, and the objects of that will, the creatures themselves. The faculty of will and the object of will are the same identical thing in God on account of the simplicity. This leads Origen to the most famous statement of his problematic: "Let the man who dares to say 'There was a time when the Son was not' understand that this is what he will be saying, 'once wisdom did not exist, and word did not exist, and life did not exist.'"[51] Here, to speak in St. Maximus' terms, there is a clear confusion on the basis of the simplicity between the Logos of God and the *logoi* of His attributes. Since there is thus no clear and real distinction between the attributes or

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[49]Ibid., 25.

[50]Origen, *On First Principles*, I: 4: 3, p. 42 of the Koetschau-Butterfield text.

[51]Ibid., IV: 4: 1, p. 315.



*logoi* of the divine nature, its will, and the activity of that will, then the Logos Himself can be viewed as the product and object of that very will: "The Father's image is reproduced in the Son, whose birth from the Father is as it were an act of his will proceeding from the mind."[52] This same lack of distinctions between the will as a "faculty of will", the will as an "activity" of nature, and the will as "object of the will" was also apparent in Nestorianism and Monophysitism, both of which emphasized for their own purposes only one of these three distinctions. The Confessor consequently distinguishes the natural, creative faculty of the will of God from the object of that will.[53]

The final principle of Monotheletism concerns that of the dialectical opposition of distinct wills. For Monotheletism, Two Wills means Two Opposing Wills: "It is impossible for two wills to exist in one person without opposition."[54] For Pyrrhus, this was meant to be the formulation of a general metaphysical principle. For St. Maximus, however, as has already been seen, this opposition is acceptable only as a formulation of the results of the Fall and the resulting dialectical oppositions in which the created human hypostasis finds itself, enslaved as it is to a knowledge that is based merely upon sensory perception and not on the Logos of God. Thus

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[52]Ibid., I: 2: 6, p. 19.

[53]*Disputation with Pyrrhus*, 21.

[54]Ibid., 16.

> If it be not possible for two wills to exist in one and the same person without opposition, then by thine own reasoning, it is possible with opposition. And if this be possible, then thou hast confessed the existence of two wills. So thou dost not differ over the number of wills, but with the principle of their opposition. So, it remains for us to discover the real cause of this conflict [of wills]. What dost thou say this is? The natural will, or sin? If thou sayest it be the natural will, and since we already know that there is no other cause of this than God, then thou makest God the Author of the conflict [of wills]. But if the cause be sin, and if Christ be free from sin, then the Incarnate God hath no opposition of any kind in those wills proper to His natures, since no effect can result from a cause which doth not exist.[55]

Pyrrhus then asks "Therefore the "willing" appertaineth to nature?", a question which elicits a response from the Confessor which recalls the distinction he made between "the simple good" when discussing the Tree of the knowledge of good and evil". He replies that "the simple willing" pertains to nature.[56] Whatever negations can be said of the will do not apply to the will as such, but to the fourth distinction which the Confessor makes, the mode of willing of a given hypostasis.[57]

### 4. The Apokatastasis as Recapitulation

Ever since the time of Origen, the doctrine of the recapitulation of all things in Christ and that of their inevitable and universal restoration and salvation in God have always been intimately connected. Indeed, the very fact of Christ's human nature which is consubstantial with all men implies an apokatastasis, for if in Adam all have died, in Christ there is a

[55] Ibid., 17.

[56] Ibid., 18, 19.

[57] Ibid., 23.



certain predetermination that all shall be made alive.[58] This interrelationship between the apokatastasis and the recapitulation highlights once again the fact that the latter doctrine is a christological way of understanding or of approaching the question of predestination.

The doctrine of recapitulation strikes at the heart of any doctrine of Limited Atonement, i.e., at any doctrine which would limit the efficacy of Christ's redemptive work to a number of elected and predestined individuals who are predestined prior to and apart from consideration of that work. If Christ's redemptive work is limited in this fashion, then His humanity will also be consubstantial only with that predetermined number of elected individuals. But since Christ is the Second Adam, this implies that there are some individuals who, not being in the Second, will neither be found in the First, Adam. Not being in the First Adam, they will not be subject to ancestral sin, and will therefore have no need of Christ.[59]

There is a christological aspect to the problem as well which is only highlighted by the Confessor's polemic against Monotheletism. On the one hand, if the Monothelete doctrine were true, and there was only one will in Christ, that of His divine Hypostasis, then the human nature would be denied not only a will, but it would also follow that the human will neither effects salvation, or contributes anything to it. The human nature would be determined externally, as it were, since Christ Himself, in His humanity, would have no will. Thus, not only would there be a denial of a full Incarnation on these grounds, but the apokatastasis of all men sharing that consubstantial nature would be an inevitable result. Yet on the other hand, if Christ's human nature was endowed with all its natural properties including a human natural will, this too would appear to compel an apokatastasis whose effects, from the standpoint of those effected, would still be the same in that they, to the degree that they are individual hypostases who in virtue of their

[58] I Corinthians 15: 22.

[59] cf. my *Free Choice in St. Maximus the Confessor*, St. Tikhon's Seminary Press, p. 225, and St. John Cassian's *Third Conference of the Abbot Chaeremon*, 7.

consubstantiality with Christ's human nature, are irresistibly determined.

This was the state of affairs prior to St. Maximus, who applies four basic correctives: 1) the Triadological, 2) the Christological, 3) the Ecclesiological, Sacramental, and 4) the Spiritual, or the Ascetic.

The Triadological corrective depends upon three elements. First there is the distinction between Nature and Principle of Existence on the one hand, and Hypostasis and Mode of Existence on the other. The second component is closely related, and this is the distinction within the Trinity of Three Unique Hypostatic Modes of Willing of the one divine natural will, "according to good pleasure, according to Economy, and according to consent,"[60] the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit respectively. Finally, the third component is the Triadological scheme of history implied by such triads as "Genesis, Kinesis, Stasis" and more especially by "Being, Well- or Ill-Being, and Ever- Well- or Ill-Being." All men are truly resurrected in Christ to "ever-being", but the state in "ever-well-being" or "ever-ill-being" that each will enjoy or suffer that resurrection depends upon their hypostatic mode of willing and existence in this life.

The Christological component in turn grounds the remaining two, the Ecclesiological and Sacramental, and the Ascetic or Spiritual. This is based upon the distinction between the Principle of Human Existence, which is consubstantial with all men, and the Mode of its Generation of the Virgin Mary in His capacity as the Second Adam, which is unique to Him alone.

[60] *Quaestiones et Dubia*, PG 90: 801B.



I put forward that rational principle which is according to power, asserting that the human [nature] which is proper to the Saviour is not something other than that which is proper to us, but that it is the same in essence and in no way differs [from ours], because He took upon Himself our nature by the ineffable assumption [of humanity] from the undefiled virginal blood of the Most Holy Mother of God, through whom the Word, having been united to [human] seed, became flesh and did not abandon being God by essence.... He had no opposition [between His wills], being by nature free from all sin, not as a mere man, but as enhominized God.... so that He might set us free by the power of [His] enhominization, by which -- to confirm the truth -- He became and effected all things for our sake, not giving lie to our essence nor to any of its innocent and natural things. rather, He deified this along with those things, deifying every human act...

Therefore, that humanity which is proper to Him alters that which is ours, not [by altering] the rational principle of the nature, but by the new mode of its Genesis. For on the one hand it is the same as ours by essence, but on the other, it is not the same by reason of [its] seedless generation. Thus, He was not a mere [man].... For clearly, having been generated without seed or with seed do not severe the [human] nature, neither do Ingenerateness or Generateness cut apart the [divine] nature.[61]

The Ecclesiological and Sacramental corrective is grounded in the fact that, in order to participate in Christ Who recapitulates all of creation and collective, sacred, and individual human history, one must personally recapitulate in His recapitulation, i.e., one must partake of the sacramental life of the Church, recapitulating the heavenly manner of His seedless generation in His Virgin Birth by participating in its sacramental counterpart. In order to share in the baptism of His Cross and Resurrection,[62] one must partake of His Virgin Birth of water and The Spirit.

[61] *Opusculum Theologicum et Polemicum* 4: PG 91: 60BD.

[62] Romans 6:1-3

Finally, as the One Logos is the many Uncreate *logoi* of God, and they are the One Uncreate Logos of God, one can only partake of Him by practicing, that is, by recapitulating, those very virtues which are the *logoi* of the Logos.

> The Church knoweth three apokatastases. One is the [apokatastasis] of everything according to the principle(logos) of virtue; in this apokatastasis one is restored who fulfills the principle of virtue in himself. The second is that of the whole [human] nature in the Resurrection. This is the apokatastasis to incorruption and immortality. The third, in the oft-cited words of Gregory of Nyssa, is the apokatastasis of the powers of the soul which, having lapsed into sin, are again restored to that condition in which they were created. For it is necessary that just as the entire nature of the flesh hopeth in time to be taken up again into incorruption in the apokatastasis, so also the powers of the soul, having become distorted during the course of the ages had instilled in it a memory of evil, so that at the end of the ages, not finding any rest, will come unto God Who hath no limit. And thus the distorted powers of the soul will be taken up into the primeval apokatastasis, into a merely discursive knowledge of, but not into the participation in, the good things [of God], where the Creator is known yet without being the cause of [their] sin.[63]

There is an apokatastasis of all, but the state of the created hypostasis in that apokatastasis, whether in ever-well-being or ever-ill-being, depends upon their own mode of existence and will and its participation or non-participation, in this life, in the life of virtue.

Sacramental recapitulation and the life in virtue, in other words, cannot be divorced for the simple fact that the *logoi* and the virtues are the very same things, i.e., the eternal power and operations of His Godhead. The virtues must be constantly recapitulated within each individual human hypostasis by an unceasing effort to bring their own created hypostatic modes of willing, their gnomies, back into conformity with the natural

[63] *Thal*, PG 90:796BC.



principles of human nature as revealed in Christ, the only sinless One.

> PYRRHUS: Virtues, then, are natural things?
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> MAXIMUS: Yes, natural things.
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> PYRRHUS: If they be natural things, why do they not exist in all men equally, since all men have an identical nature?
>
> MAXIMUS: But they do exist equally in all men because of the identical nature!
>
> PYRRHUS: Then why is there such a great disparity [of virtues] in us?
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> MAXIMUS: Because we do not all practice what is natural to us to an equal degree; indeed, if we [all] practiced equally [those virtues] natural to us as we were created to do, then one would be able to perceive one virtue in us all, just as there is one nature [in us all], and that "one virtue" would not admit of a "more" or "less".
>
> PYRRHUS: If virtue be something natural [to us], and if what is natural to us existeth not through asceticism but by reason of our creation, then why is it that we acquire the virtues, which are natural, with asceticism and labours?
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> MAXIMUS: Asceticism, and the toils that go with it, was devised simply in order to ward off deception, which established itself through sensory perception. it is not [as if] the virtues have been newly introduced from outside, for they inhere in us from creation, as hath already been said. Therefore, when deception is completely expelled, the soul immediately exhibits the slpendour of its natural virtue.[64]

[64] *Disputation with Pyrrhus*, 88-95.

The spiritual life, in other words, is that aspect of salvation which lies within the power of the individual gnomic will. By a life of disciplined self-renunciation, the human hypostasis and human nature are brought back into their proper harmony and relationship. The ignorance occasioned by the dialectic of the passions which make man dependent upon sensory knowledge only is dispelled by constant recollection and spiritual knowledge of the Incarnate Logos in all the fulness of His *logoi* through the Scriptures. Dispassion, the true free choice in the cosmos of eternal, distinct but undivided and equally good virtues and goods, a personal recapitulation of His Passionless Passion, is the ultimate goal, the Vision of God in Christ.

Viewed against the background of these correctives, Origen's understanding of the apokatastasis is not so much incorrect as it is truncated. His mistake was to consider Christology and the apokatastasis in the abstract, apart from the Mystery of the Church and the sacraments. For this reason, Origen cannot free himself of the notion that free choice is ultimately not a matter of choosing between dialectically opposed things. For this reason, the motion of creatures in his system never attains that state of dispassion; any motion is *ipso facto* passionate and a Fall away from God.

For St. Maximus, then, Christ in the whole Economy of His Incarnation this fulfills and reverses the effects of the Fall, and an essential aspect of this work is to overcome the oppositions which it introduced, not only between man's natural will and the mode of its existence, but also in the Five Distinctions of his cosmology. By His seedless generation from the Mother of God he overcomes the opposition not only of Uncreate and created natures, but of male and female as well. When He says in St. Luke 23:43 to the penitent thief "To day shalt thou be with me in Paradise," he overcomes the opposition between earth and Paradise. By His bodily Ascension into heaven He overcomes the opposition between earth and heaven, "thereby manifesting the essential *unity of sensible nature* beyond any separation."[65] By His continued bodily Ascension beyond the angelic orders of the intelligible world, He

[65]Thunberg, *Man and the Cosmos*, p. 85.



overcomes the opposition between the intelligible and the sensible, and reconstitutes human nature in Himself to be the microcosm once again. Finally, by virtue of the Incarnation itself, He effects the complete interpenetration of divine and human natures, being the Logos of all *logoi* proper to deity and to humanity.[66]

It is there, in heaven, that the final satiety of man's natural free choice will experience the boundless fulness of objects of choice, each limitless, each equally good and without any opposition to each other. In heaven there will be no hesitation nor ignorance of the outcomes of the activity of the will.

> So then, since counsel, and judgement, and free choice are [all directed towards] uncertain things that are within our power, then when there are no uncertain things, as when the Self-Subsistent Truth has been made clearly manifest to all, then [it is the case] that free choice will not be moved by any of the things in the middle and which are within our power, for there will be no evaluation or deciding between opposite [courses of action], whereby we prefer the better to the worse [course of action]. But then in this case if free choice does not exist according to the law of nature that prevails at present -- since all uncertainty has been removed from things -- then it will only be an active and intellectual appetite. Thus it will only be directed towards the mystical enjoyment, in an ineffable manner, of that which is natural the object of its appetite, towards which it is drawn by the things already enumerated. And the satiety of this appetite is the infinite extension of the appetite itself towards the things which are enjoyed, each one supernaturally partaking to the extent that he so desires.[67]

For St. Maximus this is the premier mystery of the Church, for this Vision of God, being the Vision of Christ, is fundamentally ecclesiological.

[66]Ibid., cf. the discussion on pp. 81-91.

[67]*Opusculum Theologicum et Polemicum* 1, PG 91: 24B-D, cf. pp. 109-115, and 131-154 of my *Free Choice in St. Maximus the Confessor*.

> The God who transcends all in infinite measure will be seen only by those who are pure in understanding when the mind in contemplative recollection of the principles(logoi) of beings will end up with God as cause, principle, and end of all, the creation and beginning of all things and eternal ground of the circuit of things....
>
> For numerous and of almost infinite number are the men, women, and children who are distinct from one another and vastly different by birth and appearance, by nationality and language, by customs and age, by opinions and skills, by manners and habits, by pursuits and studies, and still again by reputation, fortune, characteristics, and connections: All are born into the Church and through it are reborn and recreated in the Spirit. To all in equal measure it gives and bestows one divine form and designation, to be Christ's and to carry his name.... [For] as the center of straight lines that radiate from him he does not allow by his unique, simple, and single cause and power that the principles(logoi) of beings become disjoined at the periphery but rather he circumscribes their extension in a circle and brings back to himself the distinctive elements of beings which he himself brought into existence.[68]

For St. Maximus the Confessor, denial of the two natural wills of Christ is a denial of the very principles of the deity, and the very principles according to which creation and humanity were created, and which exist in it. Such a denial is in fact, a denial of salvation, of deification, and of the ultimate and limitless joy of heaven and the Vision of Christ.

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[68] *The Church's Mystagogy*, trans. George C. Berthold, *The Classics of Western Spirituality*, pp. 186-187.



# *THE DISPUTATION WITH PYRRHUS OF OUR FATHER AMONG THE SAINTS MAXIMUS THE CONFESSOR*

*Translated from the Greek*

*by*

JOSEPH P. FARRELL

# THE DISPUTATION WITH PYRRHUS

1. A brief statement on the recent inquiry into the agitations concerning ecclesiastical dogmas which was held by Pyrrhus, formerly Patriarch of Constantinople, and Maximus, the most devout monk, in the presence of the most pious Gregory, Patrician, the most holy bishops, and the other men, beloved of God, found with him. "Pyrrhus and those with him contended for the Byzantine innovation introduced by him and his predecessor at Byzantium, namely, that there is one will in Christ. Conversely, the doctrine of that supernatural man Maximus advocated the patristic and apostolic teaching that came down to us 'from above'", is what the most estimable Patrician Gregory said about the aforesaid men who confronted each other, that is, Pyrrhus and Maximus. Pyrrhus began the conversation with Maximus as follows:

2. PYRRHUS: What did I or my predecessor[1] ever do unto thee, father Maximus, that thou dost everywhere disparage us, accusing us of heretical notions in everyone's presence? And who esteemed and honored thee more than We, even though We never met thee personally?

3. MAXIMUS: Since God hears us, no one so honored nor so revered me as thou didst. But since thou dost now spurn Christian dogma, I considered it a terrible thing to prefer thine honor towards me more than the truth [itself].

4. PYRRHUS: In which of our conceptions have We abandoned the doctrine of Christians?

5. MAXIMUS: In conceiving one will of the deity and humanity of Christ. And not only thinking it, but also by harming

[1] Sergius I, d638, Patriarch of Constantinople and the author of the *Ekthesis*.





the entire body of the Holy Church by propagating it through thy novel Ekthesis.[2]

6. PYRRHUS: What? Dost thou really think that whosoever thinks that there is one will of Christ moves away from Christian doctrine?

7. MAXIMUS: Yes, I truly do. For what is a more irreverent conception than that which maintains that the same person with the very same will, which before the Incarnation created everything from nothing and which maintains, provides, and orders everything for salvation, after the Incarnation desireth food and drink, changeth from one position to another, and performeth all manner of similar things that are free from blame and reproach[3], but which

[2] *Ekthesis*(638). This was the central text of Monotheletism and was Sergius' own composition. Its main declaration stated:

"Because the expression one energy, although some of the Fathers use it, yet soundeth strange to the ears of some, and disquiets them...and since in the same way many take offense at the expression, two energies, since it is not used by any of the holy Fathers(on account of the fact that) we should then be obliged as a consequence to teach two mutually contradictory wills, as if God the Logos, aiming at our salvation, was willing to endure suffering, but His manhood had opposed itself to this His will, which is impious and foreign to the Christian dogma -- when even the wicked Nestorius, although he, dividing the Incarnation and introducing two Sons, did not venture to maintain two wills of the same, but, on the contrary, taught the similar willing of the two persons assumed by him; how can, then, the orthodox, who worship only one Son and Lord, admit in Him two, and those mutually opposed wills?"(Mansi X:996A-C)

[3] St. Maximus is here being careful to avoid any suggestion that natural human desires are inherently sinful, since this position would ultimately reduce to a Manichean dualism between a good God and an evil material creation. Later in the *Disputation*, St. Maximus replies to a question put by Pyrrhus that the properties of the divine and of the human natures do not define each other by dialectical opposition, since, if they did, human passibility and peccability would be the very condition of the divine impassibility and goodness, cf. paragraphs 17, 25, 210.

would by this means prove that the whole Economy of the Incarnation was not illusory?[4]

8. PYRRHUS: But is Christ one or not?

9. MAXIMUS: Yes, obviously He is one.

10. PYRRHUS: If Christ be one person, then He willed as one person. And if He willed as one person, then doubtless He hath one will, and not two.

11. MAXIMUS: To state something and not first to distinguish the different meanings of what is being said invites confusion, and ensures that what is under investigation remains obscure, which is foreign to a man of learning. Therefore, explain this to me: If Christ be one, is He God only, or man only, or both together, God and man?

12. PYRRHUS: Obviously, God and man.

13. MAXIMUS: Therefore, Christ existeth as God and as man by nature. Then did He will as God and as man, or only as Christ? If it were Christ who willed and initiated actions, being both God and man, then it is clear that, being one and the same, He willed dually and not singly. For if Christ be nothing else apart from the natures from which and in which He existeth, then obviously He willeth and operateth in a manner corresponding to each of His natures, in other words, as each nature is capable of operating. And if He hath two natures, then He surely must have two natural wills, the wills and essential operations being equal in number to the natures. For just as the number of natures of the one and the same Christ, correctly understood and explained, doth not divide Christ but rather preserveth the distinction of natures in the union, so likewise the number of essential attributes, wills, and operations

[4] St. Maximus seems to suggest here that his remarks have a certain rhetorical character, since the end result of Monotheletism, the denial of the human will of Christ, is a species of Doketism, since those passages in Holy Scriptures which suggest human choice would be reduced to being mere illusions.



attached to those two natures doth not divide Christ either. For throughout both of His natures there flowed the same activity and purpose, to wit, our salvation. This introduceth no division --God forbid!-- but rather shows that they are preserved unimpaired, in their entirety, even in the union.

14. PYRRHUS: But it is impossible not to imply some "willer" along with the will itself.[5]

15. MAXIMUS: Thou didst advance this absurdity in thy writings as well, "proving" it not with reason, but with authority. This only numbers thee with them that invoke the support of Heraclius[6] in the matter, for thou didst also agree with his lawless and illegal mixture by confirming it with thy blessing. For if one suggests that a "willer" is implied in the notion of the will, then by the exact inversion of this principle of reasoning, a will is implied in the notion of a "willer". Thus, wilt thou say that because of the one will of the superessential Godhead there is only one hypostasis, as

[5] This, along with Pyrrhus' statements in paragraphs 16 and 24 is one of the three theological principles of Monotheletism, the other two being 1) the opposition of wills if there are two wills; and 2) that what is natural is compelled. At this point in the debate, Pyrrhus has not yet explicitly indicated whether the "willer", i.e., the agent, is the hypostasis or the nature, but it is clear that he means that the agency of willing is the hypostasis.

[6] Heraclius, i.e., Heraclius the Great(ca. 575-641), Emperor from ca. 610-641. It was Heraclius' reconquest of the provinces of Egypt, Palestine, and Syria which provided that political incentive behind the formulation of Monotheletism, for these provinces contained significant Nestorian and Monophysite populations who each had their own kind of Monotheletism.

did Sabellius[7], or that because there are three hypostases there are also three wills, and because of this, three natures as well, since the canons and definitions of the Fathers say that the distinction of wills implieth a distinction of natures? So said Arius![7] (8)

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[7] Sabbellius, some confusion exists concerning the identity of the man who authored the heresy which bears his name. Some maintain that he was an early third century Roman. Others, such as St. Basil, however, describes him as being either from Libya or from Palestine. No doubt exists as to the teaching of Sabellianism, or Modalist Monarchianism as it is sometimes called. In order to safeguard the unity and monarchy of the Trinity, Sabellianism holds that the only distinction in the Godhead are simply successive operations which were all performed by One Person who simply "acted out" different roles in Salvation History, appearing in the Old Testament in the role of "Father", in the Economy as "Son", and after Pentecost as "Spirit", remaining at all times One Person in himself. The term "Son-Father" was even coined to describe this person. The heresy is thus sometimes referred to as "Patripassianism", since the implication of this doctrine is that, in his "role" as the Son, the Father suffered.

[7] Because our Lord exhibitted a will distinct from the Father at Gethsemane, Arius maintained that He was only the highest of creatures. In doing so, Arius *accepts* the principle that the faculty of will and its operations are rooted in nature, but he denies that there are two natures in Christ. He thus confesses his own type of Monotheletism.

(8) St. Augustine, conversely, does not deny two wills, divine and human, in Christ, but notably, he also does not deny their opposition. In his anti-Pelagian polemic he is in fact anxious to establish their opposition in order to demonstrate the overiding of the human will by the divine, thereby showing that Christ is the perfect example of predestination. St. Augustine is thus unequivocally a dyothelete, but with the significant difference of accepting the opposition of wills. Again, one is forced to consider the question of whether or not St. Maximus, in his struggle to confess the two wills yet deny their dialectical opposition, was in fact also responding to the position of St. Augustine. cf. note 10.



16. PYRRHUS: But it is impossible for two wills to exist in one person without opposition.[9]

17. MAXIMUS: If it be not possible for two wills to exist in one and the same person without opposition, then by thine own reasoning, it is possible with opposition. And if this be possible, then thou hast confessed the existence of two wills. So thou dost not differ over the number of wills, but with the principle of their opposition. So, it remains for us to discover the real cause of this conflict [of wills]. What dost thou say this is? The natural will, or sin?[10] If thou sayest it be the natural will, and since we already know that there is not other cause of this than God, then thou makest God the Author of the conflict [of wills]. But if the cause be sin, and if Christ be free from sin, then the Incarnate God hath no opposition of any kind in those wills proper to His natures, since no effect can result from a cause which doth not exist.

18. PYRRHUS: Therefore the "willing" appertains to nature?

19. MAXIMUS: Yes, the simple "willing", as least, appertains to nature.

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[9] This is the second principle of Monotheletism, and as can be seen from the previous discussion(cf. notes 7 and 8), the principle is designed to exclude an interior dialectic of wills within Christ.

[10] This, along with Pyrrhus' comments in paragraph 24, is one of the most significant statements in the *Disputation*, because St. Maximus, if he is to refute Monotheletism, must overcome the "Augustinian" logic of the system which would ascribe to Christ's human nature and its will a natural opposition to God, and therefore, some degree of natural sin. St. Maximus' question is posed in the form of an opposition, not between a natural, willful human sinfulness and divine virtue and grace, but of different modes of willing which take place in the human natural will itself, that created hypostatic mode which exists "in us" and that uncreated and only-begotten mode which exists "in Him". If St. Maximus did know of St. Augustine's writings, then this passage would seem to be not only a convincing demonstration of this fact, but that the Confessor is concerned to sort out some of St. Augustine's own dialectical difficulties.

20.PYRRHUS: But if the willing appertains to nature, and if the more distinguished of the Fathers say that there is one will of God and His saints, then there will be one nature of God and the saints.[11]

21.MAXIMUS: Earlier we said that it is necessary for one who wishes to speak about the truth to distinguish precisely the meanings of what is being said because error arises out of ambiguity. I will therefore ask thee this: thou must say whether the saints, when saying that there is one will of God and the saints, mean the creative and essential will of God [itself], or whether they

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[11] As has been noted, St. Gregory the Theologian amongst others, moves in the milieu of the immediate aftermath of the Ecumenical Council of Nicea, when the Origenistic paradigm that two wills meant two opposing wills was still influencing theological formulation. Consequently, the eschatological implication of Pyrrhus' remarks is a kind of heavenly, eschatological Monotheletism, Origen's *On First Principles* suggests. Origen begins by posing the problem of free choice from the perspective of Heaven:

"It is certain that no living creature can be altogether inactive and immovable, but that it is eager for every kind of movement and for continual action and volition; and it is clear, I think, that this nature resides in all living beings. Much more then must a rational being such as man be always engaged in some movement or activity.... So we seek to know whether in that life which is 'hid with Christ in God,' that is, in the eternal life, there will be for us any such order or condition of existence."(II:11:1)

Unfortunately Origen's understanding of free choice is couched in terms of the dialectic of oppositions, and thus, in order for there to be free choice in heaven

"it is possible that in the many and endless periods throughout diverse and immeasurable ages it may either descend from the Highest good to the lowest evil or be restored from the lowest evil to the Highest good."(III:1:23)

See also the discussion on pp. 61-65 of my *Free Choice in St. Maximus the Confessor*, St. Tikhon's Seminary Press.



τὸ θελητόν

mean the object of that will.[12] For the will and the object of that will are not the same things, just as the eye of the observer is not the same thing as what is being observed. The first is inherent in a thing, but the second is external to it. If they said this with reference to the essential will, then they should also be found saying in reference to God and the saints that the saints are co-natural and co-creators with God; but they will then be found contradicting themselves, for they also said that two things different in essence cannot have a common will. But if they say this in reference to the object of the will then this is explainable in terms of some cause, or as some say, by a misuse of language, for the Fathers had only the object of the will in mind when they said "one will of God and the saints:. Nor doth anything absurd follow from this, for they determined that the will was one of the properties of [any given] nature.

22.PYRRHUS: If in our wills we differ from ourselves, or from each other, and now will something and now do not will it, then not only shall we be of a different nature than other men --for we often differ with their wills-- but we shall change our own nature any number of times as well.[13]

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[12] St. Maximus here introduces one of the distinctions crucial to the understanding of his dyothelete teaching, that of "will" as a "faculty of will" inherent in rational nature as one of its essential operations, and the "will" as an external "object" or even "purpose".

[13] Pyrrhus' argument depends upon a "substantial" connection of, or confusion between 1) the faculty of will, 2) the nature in which it inheres, and 3) the object of the will. Thus, if the object of the will is ultimately and substantially connected with the nature of the faculty of will which wills it, then any change in what is willed(the object of will) must imply a change in the nature itself. The "object of will" is thus viewed by Pyrrhus in an almost Neoplatonic way as a kind of emanation from the nature.

τὸ θέλειν τὸ πῶς θέλειν

23.MAXIMUS: The will and the mode of willing[14] are not the same, just as the power of sight and the mode of perception are not the same. Will, like sight, is of nature. All things which have an identical nature have identical abilities. But the mode of willing, like the mode of perception --in other words, to will to walk or to will not to walk, and the perception of the right hand or of the left, or of up or down, or the contemplation of concupiscence or of the τρόπος rational principles in beings-- is only a mode of the use of a power, of the employment of will and of perception. And the same distinction may be applied to other things as well. These things demonstrate that have, by nature, the will to eat or not to eat, to walk or not to walk. But these negatives are not applicable to the will as such, but only to the particular mode of willing.[15] In other words, things come to pass by choices. If we assume that the things

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Pyrrhus' statement is reminiscent of the Arian argument recorded by St. Athanasius in *The First Discourse Against the Arians*, 10: "How they trifle appears from the following questions:--'Has He free will, or has He not? is He good from choice according to free will, and can He, if He will, alter, being of an alterable nature? or, as wood and stone, has He not His choice free to be moved and incline hither and thither?'"(*Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Second Series, Volume IV, p.326).

14 Ultimately, Pyrrhus' previous argument depends on the underlying presupposition of the "substantialized hypostasis" of Monophysitism, i.e., on the confusion between hypostasis and essence in favour of hypostasis which seems to underwrite all Monophysite systems. St. Maximus is quick to respond to this underlying presupposition in Pyrrhus' previous remark by employing for his own christological purposes the Cappadocian distinction between "Principle of nature" and "mode of its existence", i.e., essence and hypostasis. The will as a faculty is natural, but the mode of its usage by a particular hypostasis is always unique.

15 The Confessor's language is strongly reminiscent of that of St. Augustine in *On the Forgiveness of Sins and Baptism 30*, (*Writings Against Pelagius, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, First Series, Volume V, pp 56,106,130,141) where he says:



created by God and willed by Him pass out of existence, it doth not follow that His essential and creative will, which is presupposed in those things, also passeth out of existence.

24.PYRRHUS: If thou sayest that the will is natural, and if what is natural be compelled, and if thou sayest that the wills in Christ are natural, thou dost in fact take away all his voluntary motion.[16]

25.MAXIMUS: Not only doth His divine and uncreated nature have no natural compulsion, neither doth His rational and created.[17] For the rational nature hath the natural ability and rational appetite [proper to it]. This is called the "faculty of will" of the rational soul. It is according to this [faculty] that we consider when willing, and in considering, we choose the things which we

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"Unless, therefore, we obtain not simply determination of will, which is freely turned in this direction and that, and has its place amongst those natural goods which a bad man may use badly; but also a good will, which has its place among those goods of which it is impossible to make a bad use.... Since therefore the will is either good or bad, and since of course we have not the bad will from God, it remains that we have of God a good will."(*Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, First Series, Volume V, *St. Augustine, Writings against Pelagius*, p. 56.)

However, it should be noted that, whereas the Pelagian debates occur in a more anthropological context, where the Trinitarian distinction between essence and hypostasis, precisely because it has receded into the background, gives the flavor of the Pelagian controversy a more philosophical flavor. St. Maximus, however, makes this distinction the very fulcrum on which he hinges everything he has to say in connection with the subject of free choice.

16 This is the third principle of Monotheletism.

17 This is a direct polemic not only against the Origenist basis behind Pyrrhus' previous statement, but also against Pyrrhus' substantial connection between faculty of will and object of will which made the object of will a kind of necessary emanation of the natural faculty of will.

would. And when willing we also inquire, examine, deliberate, judge, are inclined toward, elect, impel ourselves toward, and make use of a thing. As hath already been stated, if the rational appetite, in other words, willing and consideration, be proper to our nature, then so are deliberation, inquiry, examination, choice, judgement, inclination towards, election, and the impelling of ourselves toward [something] the natural actions of rational things, and these are not subject to compulsion.[18] Once this is admitted, thy proposition is shown to be most absurd, for according to it, what is natural is also entirely compelled. [If one were to continue in this line of reasoning, then] God, Who is by nature God, by nature good, and by nature Creator, must of necessity be [not only] God and good, but also Creator.[19] To think, much less to speak, in this manner is

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[18] That is to say, the principle that what is natural is compelled does not follow, for while the process of the faculty of the will is ever the same, being an essential property of rational natures, the hypostatic employment of the will, that is, the mode of willing, and the objects thus willed, are different.

[19] That is, if there is no distinction between essence and will, there will be no distinction between the will and its various objects, and the objects will thus be the natural and inevitable result of the former's activity. In other words, underlying Pyrrhus' confusion of essence, essential operations, and object of will is the Neoplatonic simplicity, which implies the whole Origenist Problematic all over again, for in the annihilation of the distinctions between hypostasis, energies and will, and essence, God's Monarchy and Creatorhood become limiting definitions of the divine essence, and therefore in order always to be Father, God also always had to be Creator and Creation always had to exist:



blasphemous. Who then attributes necessity to God?[20] Consider, my friend, if thou wilt, the blasphemy of such a proposition! For if one saith that the wills in Christ are natural, and if according to thee he who has a natural will doth not have voluntary motion, then it necessarily follows that thins which will in a natural way have a movement that is voluntary. But then God --Who is beyond beings- - and all beings with a rational and intellectual nature and which possess the faculty of will have involuntary motion, and only that which is without a soul and without a will have voluntary motion! But the blessed Cyril, in the criticisms of his *Third Chapter Against Theodoret*, released us from any further argument by stating, quite explicitly, that "Nothing which is natural is involuntary in the rational nature."[21] It is possible for anyone that

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"Now as one cannot be a father apart from having a son, nor a lord apart from holding a possession or a slave, so we cannot even call God almighty if there are none over whom he can exercise his power. Accordingly, to rpove that Gos is almighty we must assume the existence of the universe. for if anyone would have it that certain ages, or periods of time, or whatever he cares to call them elapsed during which the present creation did not exist, he would undoubtedly prove that in those ages or periods God was not almighty, but that he afterwards became almighty from the time when he began to have creatures over whom he could exercise power.... But if there was not time when he was not almighty, there must have always existed the things in virtue of which he was almighty; and there must have always existed things under his sway, which own him as their ruler."(I:2:10.

And thus "it follows plainly from this, that at no time whatever was God not Creator, nor Benefactor, nor Providence."(I:4:3)

[20] By asking this question, St. Maximus is perhaps being rhetorical, trying perhaps to force Pyrrhus to acknowledge or to recall Origen by name and thereby unmask the root of the Monothelete difficulty.

[21] cf. also *The Incarnation of the Only-Begotten*: "He made the human soul his own, thus making it victorius over sin, colouring it, as it were, with the dye of the steadfastness and immutability of his own nature."(Henry Bettensen, *The Later Christian Fathers*, p. 263.)

Fifth Ec. Council

desireth [the truth on this matter] to learn it merely by taking this chapter into his hands.

26.PYRRHUS: One should gladly accept what has been proven by this inquiry. And the argument [thus far] hath shown, with great clarity, that there are two natural wills in Christ. However, just as we say that it is impossible for there to be one synthetic nature from two natures, so it is also possible for there to be one synthetic will from two natural wills. Thus, then that say there are two wills in Christ do so because of the distinction of natures in Christ, and them that say there is one will do so because of the supreme union. Let them differ no longer with each other only over mere vocabulary. Indeed, "with us the truth is not in words", as Saint Gregory the Theologian said, "but in realities".

συναλήθεια = possible

27.MAXIMUS: Thou shouldst realize that thou fallest into error because of this; thou dost seem entirely ignorant of the fact that "synthetic things" are said in reference to the hypostasis, and are not said in reference to some other ["third kind" of] nature. This is also the common doctrine of all, both of the pagan philosophers, and of the teachers of the Church who are full of divine knowledge. If thou sayest there is a synthesis of wills [into one will] then thou shalt be forced to say that there is a synthesis of all other natural properties as well. In other words, if thou art to be consistent in thy position, [there must be a synthesis] of the Uncreate and the created, of the Infinite and the finite, of the Undefined and the defined, of the Immortal and the mortal, and of the incorruptible and the corruptible. Thus thou dost assent to a ridiculous notion. For what shall a will that is produced from two wills be called? For it is not possible for something synthetic to be designated by the same name as its components. Long ago, to designate by the term "nature" [that which resulted from a synthesis of two] natures was heretical.[22] Moreover, thou dividest Him from

[22] cf. Anathema VIII, Fifth Ecumenical Council(II Constantinople):





the Father by means of this composite will, for a composite will characterizes only a composite nature.

28.PYRRHUS: There is nothing, then, which the natures and natural properties have in common?

29.MAXIMUS: Nothing, save only the hypostasis of the same natures, for just as He was without confusion in the hypostasis of His two natures, so He was without division in the union of His two natures.[23]

30.PYRRHUS: What? Do the Fathers, whose doctrines constitute the law, the rule, the glory, and the pride of the Church, do they not say "that from which cometh the common glory is one thing, and that from which cometh the common humiliation is another?"[24]

"If anyone uses the expression 'of two natures,' confessing that a union was made of the Godhead and of the humanity, or the expression 'the one nature made flesh of God the Word,' and shall not so understand those expressions as the holy Fathers have taught, to wit: that of the divine and human nature there was made an hypostatic union, whereof is one Christ; but from these expressions shall try to introduce one nature or substance [made by a mixture] of the Godhead and manhood of Christ; let him be anathema."(*Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Second Series, Volume XIV, p. 313)

[23] St. Maximus is quite clear on this point, for if there were something other than the hypostasis of the eternally and Only-begotten Son and Word in common between the deity and humanity, that "something else" would also be a mediator between God and man, and Christ would not be the unique Way to God.

[24] cf. the Tome of Pope St. Leo the Great, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Second Series, Vol XIV, p. 257:

"One of these truths, accepted without the other, would not profit unto salvation, and it was equally dangerous to believe the Lord Jesus Christ to be merely God and not man, or merely man and not God."

31.MAXIMUS: That holy Father said this in reference to the mode of the exchange of attributes. As is clear from the previous [statement], the exchange doth not concern one, but two, things, and different kinds of things. According to the exchange, the natural attributes of the two parts of Christ are exchanged according to the ineffable union, without a change or mixture of the natural principles. Thus, if thou sayest that there is a common will by the mode of exchange, then thou art really saying that there is not one will but two wills. So, once again, thine ingenious argument brings thee back to the position that thou tried to avoid.

32.PYRRHUS: How? Was not the flesh moved by the decision of the Word Who is united with it?[25]

33.MAXIMUS: Thou dividest Christ by talking like this! For Moses and David, and as many as were susceptible to the influence of the divine energies, were moved by His command and laid aside human and fleshly properties. But, following all the holy Fathers in this as in all things, we say: since the God of All hath Himself become man without change, [it followeth] that the same Person not only willed appropriately as God in His Godhead, but also willed appropriately as man in His humanity. For the things that exist came to be out of nothing, and have therefore a power that impels than to hold fast to existence, and not to non-existence, which [power] is simultaneously an inclination towards that which

St. Cyril of Alexandria states that certain statements in the Holy Scriptures must be attributed to Christ's deity since they refer to His glory, and others, referring to His lowliness must be referred to His humanity.(*Epistle 39 to John of Antioch*)

25 The idea of "flesh" being moved by the Word is Apollinarian both in language and content. For Apollinarius the Incarnation results in "one composite being and nature moved solely by one will."(Leitzman, *Apollinaris von Laodicea und seiner Schule, texte, und Untersuchungen*, p. 277)



naturally maintaineth them in existence, and a drawing back from things destructive [to their existence].[26] Consequently, the super-essential Word, by virtue of His humanity, had of His humanity this self-preserving power which clingeth to existence. And [in fact], He exhibited both [aspects of this power], willing the inclination and the drawing back on account of His [human] energy. He exhibited the inclination to cling to existence in the natural and innocent use [He made] of a great many things, and the drawing back at the time of the Passion, when He drew back from the voluntary death. How doth the Church of God do anything absurd if She confess that, along with His human and created nature, there existed also in Him those principles inserted creatively in that nature by him, without which that nature could not exist?

34.PYRRHUS: If fear be attributed to us by nature, and if this be a thing worthy of reproof, then according to thine opinion, things that are worthy of reproof, such as sin, exist in us by nature.[27]

35.MAXIMUS: Again thou dost reason erroneously from an equivocation. Fear can be both proper to nature and contrary to nature. Fear is proper to nature when it is a force that clings to existence by drawing back [from what is harmful to existence]. But it is contrary to nature when it is an irrational dread [of something]. Therefore The Lord did not have that type of fear that is contrary to nature[and] which exists through thoughts stemming from betrayal. Rather, He assumed, as good, that which is proper to nature and which expresses that power, inherent in our nature, which holdeth fast to being, willing it for our behalf. These natural

26 The argument here is that human nature has as one of its principles that it seeks those things which will sustain its existence, amongst which are the virtues. The argument that man by nature seeks the good is Cyrillic, and ultimately, Platonic.

27 Once again, the context and terms of the debate resonate with paradigms and questions that would also be appropriate in a more "Augustinian" and "Western" context.

things of the will are present in Him, but not exactly in the same manner as they are in us.[28] He verily did hunger and thirst, not in a mode similar to ours, but in a mode which surpasseth us, in other words, voluntarily. Thus, He was truly afraid, not as we are, but in a mode surpassing us.[29] To put it concisely: all things that are natural in Christ have both the rational principle proper to human nature, but a super-natural mode of existence, in order that both the [human] nature, by means of its rational principle, and the Economy, by means of its super-natural mode of existence, might be believed.

λόγος τρόπος

ὑπὲρ φύσιν τρόπον

36.PYRRHUS: In order that we may avoid further mystifying verbal subtleties, we should confess only that the same Person is both perfect God and perfect man, and avoid saying anything beyond this, since if one says 'perfect', one signifieth thereby all natural qualities involved in that perfection.[30]

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[28] The allusion is to the distinction St. Maximus earlier employed between the will as such, which is natural, and the mode of willing, which is hypostatic. St. Maximus emphasizes the fact that Christ's hypostasis is that of the uncreated and super-essential Word, and therefore the mode of His employment of the human will is not that of a created human hypostasis, but precisely that of a divine and eternal mode of willing. To this end he also employs the language found in many Fathers of the distinction of humanity "in Him" and "in us".

[29] That is, if Christ was afraid of death, His fear, being a human fear which is experienced by a divine Person, must of necessity far surpass any fear of death which we experience. The implications of this statement are startling, particularly for the question of Christ's temptations, for it suggests, not that Christ could have sinned, but precisely that by not sinning, He is the only one Who was ever truly tempted, for the moment sin begins, temptation ends.

[30] Pyrrhus, defeated by Maximus' arguments, now returns to the position originally promulgated by Sergius in the *Ekthesis*, that simply of prohibiting any discussion on the subject.



37.MAXIMUS: If it be an act of reverence on for thee to say that the natures are without the characteristic attributes of each, or that Christ is perfect God and perfect man without the properties that go with each perfection, then the Councils anathematize thee,[31] and before them, the Fathers, [because they] decreed that we should not only confess the natures but the properties of each nature as well.[32] The same Person is not only Perfect God and perfect man, but also hath the properties concomitant with each perfection. That is to say, the same one Person is both visible and invisible, mortal and immortal, corruptible and incorruptible, touchable and untouchable, created and Uncreate. And according to the same reverent way of understanding, they also correctly taught that there are two wills of one and the same Person, not only defining it by the number two, but also by means of the expression "one to another", that is, by the contrast of each will one to another, the human to the divine. For the nature of the number [two] is not restricted in any particular way.

38.PYRRHUS: If it be not possible to say that which the Fathers themselves say on account of the heretics' misusing these expressions, then let us be satisfied with the conciliar definitions alone, and speak neither of one nor of two wills.

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[31] The Tome of Pope St. Leo I says: "For each of the natures retains its proper character without defect; and as the form of God does not take away the form of a servant, so the form of a servant does not impair the form of God."(*Nicene and Post-Niecen Fathers*, Second Series, Volume XIV p. 255)

[32] "This one and the same Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son [of God] must be confessed to be in two natures, unconfusedly, immutably, indivisibly, inseparably [united], and that without the distinction of natures being taken away by such union, but rather the peculiar property of each nature being preserved and being united in one Person and subsistence, not separated or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son and only-begotten, God the Word, our Lord Jesus Christ..."(*Definition*, Fourth Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Second Series, Volume XIV, pp. 264-265.)

Vilje, en naturlig egenskap

39.MAXIMUS: If we should confess merely the conciliar definitions, then we should not speak of "one incarnate nature of God the Word,"[33] ([ an expression] which embraces the whole mystery of godliness) since it was not defined by any council. Nevertheless, even if one were only to confess what the Councils say, one would still be compelled to confess the attributes of each nature, and hence the wills, along with the natures. For if one saith that the natural attributes, with their natural properties, exist in the natures of Christ, and if a will be rooted in each nature, then thou art compelled to confess, together with the natures, the wills as well as [all] the other natural properties. Or again, if Arius and Apollinarius, who both used the expression "one will", were anathematized by the Councils --for both of them misused this expression to establish their own heresy, the latter trying to prove thereby that the flesh is consubstantial with the Word, the former trying to introduce the notion that the Son is different in essence from the Father[34] -- then how is it possible for us to exercise devotion without confessing those [doctrines which are the] opposite to these heresies? The Fifth Council(so that I may omit

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[33] The famous statement of St. Cyril of Alexandria. St. Cyril is quite clear that this expression does not imply any form of Monophysitism:

"We do not mean that the nature of the Word was changed and made flesh or, on the other hand, that he was transformed into a complete man consisting of soul and body, but instead we affirm this: that the Word substantially united to himself flesh, endowed with life and reason, in a manner mysterious and inconceivable, and became man, and was called 'Son of Man' uniting it substantially, not merely by way of divine favour or good will... and that though the natures joined together to form a real unity are different, it is one Christ and Son coming from them -- not implying that the difference between the natures was abolished through their union..."(*Second Letter to Nestorius*, trans. Lionel R. Wickham, Oxford, p. 5, paragraph 3.)

[34] For Arius and Apollinarius, the will was hypostatic, but both drew differing and opposed conclusions. For Arius, Christ's will was opposed to the Father at Gethsemane, and therefore Christ was not God. For Apollinarius, the will, like the soul, of the flesh was replaced in Christ by the Logos in a substantial union.





everything else) decreed in so many words that "all the definitions of Saints Athanasius, Basil, Gregory, and other approved doctors be received", and in these men the doctrine of two innate wills is clearly taught and handed down.[35]

40. PYRRHUS: Dost thou not think that thou art confusing the many different senses of the term "natural will"?

41.MAXIMUS: Excluding the deity, how many forms of life wouldst thou say there are?

42.PYRHHUS: Thou sayest.

43.MAXIMUS: There are three forms of life.

44.PYRRHUS: Which are they?

ἡ φυτική ἡ αἰσθητική ἡ νοερά

45.MAXIMUS: The vegetable, the sentient, and the rational.

46.PYRRHUS: Correct.

47.MAXIMUS: Since each of them is distinguished from the others by a specific creative principal, then what is that distinctive and particular principle of each?

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[35] cf. Fifth Ecumenical Council, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Second Series, Volume XIV, p. 303: "We further declare that we hold fast to the decrees of the four Councils, and in every way follow the holy Fathers, Athanasius, Hilary, Basil, Gregory the Theologian, Gregory of Nyssa, Ambrose, Theophilus, John (Chrysostom) of Constantinople, Cyril, Augustine, Proclus, Leo and their writings on the true faith."

48. PYRRHUS: I request that thou clarify this as well.

49. MAXIMUS: Plants are distinguished by the property of a productive and growing motion, the sentient by motion caused by impulse, but the rational by self-determination.

50. PYRRHUS: Thou hast fully demonstrated that the properties of each form of life are distinct and unconfused.

51. MAXIMUS: If the property of both forms of life hath been proven to be distinct and unconfused, then I ask again: Is not the nourishing, productive, and growing motion, in the case of the plant, and the motion of impulse in the case of the sentient, proper to them by nature?

52. PYRRHUS: Without a doubt, they are proper to them by nature.

53. MAXIMUS: Then by the same reasoning, the self-determinative motion [is one of the principles] in the rational [nature].

54. PYRRHUS: This teaching on the principles thou must supply as well.

55. MAXIMUS: If self-determination be proper by nature to rational natures, then every rational creature is by nature a





θελητικόν
creature that willeth, for blessed Diadochus of Photike[36] defined
θέλησις the will as self-determination. So, if all rational [natures possess] the faculty of will by nature, and if God the Word truly became flesh which was rationally and intellectually animated, then He also became man, possessing the [human] faculty of will by virtue of [His human] essence. And if this be so, then should the natural will [ever] be mentioned it will be offensive to the ears, not of the devout, but of heretics![37]

56. PYRRHUS: That the wills of Christ are natural I am already persuaded from what hath been said previously, nor do I demand any further proof regarding this matter. the doctrine hath been demonstrated, not only with the testimonies of those who speak of divine things, but also because the nature of things themselves testifieth that the same [Person] willed in a manner appropriate to each of His natures: on the one hand, determining as God, and on the other, obeying as man, and that because the natural wills correspond in every way to the natures, the uncreate [will] to the uncreate[nature], and the created [will] to the created [nature]. And I am persuaded that one will cannot be digested into another, even though they belong to the same [Person], because they, like the natures, are without beginning in the one case and a work in the other; one is Uncreate, the other, created; one maketh, the other is made; one is uncircumscribed, the other, limited; one deifieth, and the other is deified. But there are still some in Byzantium who place the natural wills in opposition [to each other] and who thus

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36 Diadochus of Photike(d. ca. 470): Little comparitively is known of Diadochus. He was bishop of Photike, and one of the opponents of Monophysitism at Chalcedon. Few of his works survive.

37 St. Maximus is referring to the position adopted by Pyrrhus in his *Typos*.

maintain that the Fathers said that the Lord had a human will by appropriation [only].[38]

57.MAXIMUS: Since thou wast thyself the author of this wondrous and resplendent doctrine, then what hind of "appropriation" didst thou mean? The essential, by which each of the two natures hath the natural attributes which belong to it? Or the relative, by which we appropriate in a friendly manner something otherwise foreign to us, neither suffering nor effecting any of these things of ourselves?

58.PYRRHUS: It is plain that the relative appropriation is meant.

59.MAXIMUS: So then, this hath already been proven to be absurd. But it would be more reasonable to examine more exactly whether man is by nature a being that wills, or not. For once having proven this, the blasphemy of this kind of heresy will be [evident].

60.PYRRHUS: If thou wilt, let us examine this.

61.MAXIMUS: Not only those who have examined the nature [of things] with their reason, and thus who have surpassed the multitude, but the usage of the uneducated hath also affirmed that what is natural is not taught. So, if natural things be not acquired through teaching, then we have will without having acquired it or

[38] The reference is to what appears to have been a variation of Monotheletism within the Byzantine capital. If one accepts the observations of Lethel in *Theologie de la Agonie du Christ*, its basic tenets were that, having acknowledged the will as hypostatic, and therefore maintaining that there was only one will, that of the divine Hypostasis, some Monotheletes nevertheless had to account for Christ's words at Gethsemane, and thus the will was appropriated.





being taught it, for no one hath ever had a will which was acquired by teaching. Consequently, man hath the faculty of will by nature. And again, if man by nature possesseth the faculty of reason, and if rational nature be also self-determining, and if self-determination be, according to the Fathers, the will, then man possesseth the will by nature. And again, if nature [moveth without reason] in irrational beings, and moveth in man by virtue of his own free will, then men is by nature a being endowed with will. And again: if man was made after the image of the blessed and super-essential Godhead, and if the divine nature be self-determined, then he is by nature endowed with free will. For it hath been stated already that the Fathers defined the will as self-determination. And that will really existeth in all men. It is not the case that it existeth in some men and doth not in others, for what is observed in all [men] generally characterizes the nature of all the individuals in that [general category]. Consequently, man by nature possesseth the faculty of will.

62.PYRRHUS: It hath been fully demonstrated that man by nature hath the faculty of will.

63.MAXIMUS: Having proven this, then let us examine, as we previously proposed to do, the absurdity of their proposition.

64.PYRRHUS: Very well.

65.MAXIMUS: If man hath the faculty of will by nature, as hath just been demonstrated, and if they yet maintain that Christ hath the human will only by mere appropriation of it, then it is necessary for these people to be consistent and to say that His other natural properties are also in Him by mere appropriation of them. It follows that the whole mystery of the Economy must be assumed

to be an illusion.[39] Furthermore, if the decree of Sergius anathematized not just those who explained how there are two wills, but simply those who say there are two wills, notwithstanding that they erroneously say that it is by mere appropriation, they bring upon themselves the [aforementioned] anathema.[40] And again, by the proposition which they maintain, albeit erroneously, if persons be introduced with wills, then those who say, albeit erroneously, that there are two wills by appropriation must, by the same token, say that there are two persons [by appropriation as well].[41] And who was it that could tolerate the division of the one Person [of Christ] into two persons?[42]

66. PYRRHUS: Why, did not the Fathers say that Christ formed our will in Himself?

67. MAXIMUS: Yes, they did.

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[39] illusion: The argument is that the Monotheletism reduces ultimately to a form of Doketism of the most extreme kind, for the principle that no nature can exist without its rational principles. Thus, if Christ has no human will, He did not truly become man.

[40] Sergius's *Ekthesis* prohibited any discussion of one or of two wills, and thus even the idea that Christ had only one will is proscribed and under the anathema of the *Ekthesis*.

[41] St. Maximus has returned to consider the principle that "The Will is Hypostatic" from the standpoint of the notion of some of the Monotheletes that the will was appropriated. If the will is a feature of, or "rooted in" hypostasis, then Christ, if He appropriated a human will, also appropriated a human hypostasis.

[42] Perhaps this is another rhetorical question, for it was precisely Nestorius who, according to St. Cyril of Alexandria, maintained that God the Word did not become man, but assumed, or appropriated, a man.





68. PYRRHUS: Then when speaking of the human will they referred, not to that which appertaineth to Him by mere nature, but to that which He took upon Himself by appropriation.

69. MAXIMUS: But since the Fathers say that He took upon Himself our nature in the same way, then in the opinion of these people He will be discovered to have the nature by mere appropriation as well. For if the former proposition be true, then the latter is also, and if the latter be false the former is as well.[43]

70. PYRRHUS: So, when they said that He formed our will in Himself, they were referring to what appertaineth to Him by nature?

71. MAXIMUS: Yes, they were.

72. PYRRHUS: How canst thou say this?

73. MAXIMUS: Because the same Person was wholly God with the humanity, and wholly man with the Godhead. The same Person, as man, subjected human nature in Himself, and through Himself, to God the Father, showing Himself as the flawless image and pattern for us to imitate in order that we may voluntarily draw

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[43] The previous argument has now been inverted, for if the will is natural, and Christ appropriates the human will, then He has only appropriated human nature, and not actually become perfect man.

nigh unto God, the Author and Finisher of our salvation,[44] no longer willing anything apart from that which He willeth.[45]

74.PYRRHUS: But those [who confess only one will] do not do so from an evil disposition or cunning, but only mean thereby to express the highest union.

75.MAXIMUS: If this be conceded to the Severans,[46] then, taking advantage of this concession, they will say, not unreasonably, "We do not say 'one nature' from an evil disposition or cunning, but because we wish, just as you do by the expression 'one will', to manifest the Supreme Union [of God and man in Christ]." [47] For

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[44] Hebrews 12:2

[45] For St. Maximus, Our Lord manifests Himself as the Author, Finisher, and Pattern of our salvation at Gethsemane precisely because He voluntarily submits the human will, by a *human* act of will, to the Father.

[46] The "Severans" is the Confessor's standard term of reference for the Monophysites.

[47] The attitude of St. Maximus is in clear contradiction to that found in the recent study *Does Chalcedon Divide or Unite?: Towards Convergence in Orthodox Christology*. There, in the "Agreed Statements" held between Orthodox and the so-called "oriental"(i.e., Nestorian and Monophysite) churches at the Third Unofficial Consultation in Geneva, Switzerland, 16-21 August, 1970, a distinction is drawn between "the doctrinal definitions and canonical legislations of a Council, but also between the true *intention* of the dogmatic definition of a Council and the particular terminology in which it is expressed, which latter has less authority than the intention."(*Does Chalcedon Divide or Unite?*, World Council of Churches, 1981. p. 10)





those who say what thou hast just said lend weapons to them that oppose them, after the manner of David and Goliath.[48] Observe! They who state that there is only one will agree with them both in though and speech! Nevertheless, this "one will", what do they[49] choose to call it? It is only right that they should furnish some term for it.

76.PYRRHUS: They say that this is a gnomic [will].

77.MAXIMUS: So, if it be a gnomic will, it is derived from a prior gnomie, and if it be so received, then that gnomie, as the original from which it is derived, is an essence.

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It is worth recalling that St. Cyril initially does not use the term *physis* with the precision of the Antiochenes, but that he *does* subsequently move in this direction by accepting the formula of union. It might be argued in favor of the WCC study that St. John of Damascus does not refer to the Monophysites as herectics but only as schismatics. However, St. Maximus is quite clear in calling Monophysitism a heresy. This is because Monophysitism, in its Severan form, attempts to confess "two operations" without the underlying natures, a metaphysical impossibility. The Confessor is quite explicit in his accusations against Severus. According to the Confessor, Severus' error is twofold: 1) he confuses hypostasis and nature and nevertheless calls the properties of each nature a really existent thing(*Opuscule 2*, PG 91: 40C); and 2) that the attempt thus to distinguish two natural properties without their underlying natures is in fact "a real confusion of the real verities in Christ."(*Opuscule 2*, PG 44A) A little later on, referring both to Nestorius and Severus, the Confessor seems to interpret their "intentions" somewhat differently than the Geneva consultation: "Truly, this is a pair of evil and law-breaking men who would thus insanely and wickedly transgress the truth of correct dogmas in opposite [ways]."(*Opuscule 2*, PG 44 AB)

[48] I Kings(III Kings) 17

[49] "they": i.e., the Monophysites. St. Maximus has thus perceived that the root of the heresy of Monotheletism is that of Monophysitism.

78.PYRRHUS: The gnomie is not an essence.

79.MAXIMUS: It is be not an essence, then it must be a quality. So, a quality is discovered that hath its existence from another quality, which is impossible. What then do they now say the gnomie is?

80.PYRRHUS: The gnomie is nothing else than the very thing which the blessed Cyril defined as "the mode of life" τρόπος ζωῆς

81.MAXIMUS: Dost thou maintain that a good or evil mode of life is by choice or not? ἐξ ἐπιλογῆς

82.PYRRHUS: By choice, obviously.

83.MAXIMUS: Do we choose for ourselves, voluntarily and deliberately? Or involuntarily and without deliberation?

84.PYRRHUS: Obviously, voluntarily and deliberately.

ἡ γνώμη

85.MAXIMUS: So then, the gnomie is nothing else than an act of willing in a particular way, in relation to some real or assumed good.[50]

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50 "Real or assumed good": The conception is referred to at much greater length in the *Opusculum Theologicum et Polemicum I* and ultimately comes from Aristotle via Nemesius(cf. my *Free Choice in St. Maximus the Confessor*, pp. 99-109). The term was used exclusively of the created human mode of willing which always implies a hesitation before courses of action which, as a result of the Dialectic of Oppositions introduced at the Fall, always appear, not as distinct and equally good alternatives, but as a "more" or "less" good.





86.PYRRHUS: I would regard this as a correct interpretation of the patristic definition.

87.MAXIMUS: If this interpretation of the patristic definition be correct, then in the first place it is not possible to say that this [appropriated will] is a gnomic will, for how is it possible for a will to proceed from a will?[51] Thus, those who say that there is a gnomic in Christ, as this inquiry is demonstrating, are maintaining that he is a mere man, deliberating in a manner like unto us, having ignorance, doubt and opposition, since one only deliberates about something which is doubtful, not concerning what is free of doubt.[52] By nature we have an appetite simply for what by nature is good, but we gain experience of the goal in a particular way, through inquiry and counsel. Because of this, then, the gnomic will is fitly ascribed to us, being a mode of the employment [of the will],[53] and not a principle of nature, otherwise nature [itself]

τρόπος οὐσα χρήσεως
οὐ λόγος φύσεως

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51 That is, if the will is hypostatic, how can a particular mode of willing(the human and gnomic) come from another mode of willing(the divine)?

52 The dialectic of good and evil, or of "more" or "less" good introduced hesitation into the process of willing, and thus, deliberation and hesitation over choices to be made is only made over things of uncertain outcome.

53 This is the most precise definition that St. Maximus gives to the gnomic will: it is that mode of willing which is not simply proper to the category of hypostasis as such, but to that category of hypostasis whose mode of willing must always involve natural processes of doubt and hesitation, and which therefore must fitly be ascribed "to us". It is a mode of the mode of willing proper only to the human hypostasis, and connoting to some extent the habitual manner in which the human hypostasis employs its natural will.

would change innumerable times.[54] But the humanity of Christ does not simply subsist [in a manner] similar to us, but divinely, for He Who appeared in the flesh for our sakes was God. It is thus not possible to say that Christ had a gnomic will. For the Same had being itself, subsisting divinely, and thus naturally hath an inclination to the good, and a drawing away from evil, just as Basil, the great eye of the Church, said when explaining the interpretation of the forty-fourth Psalm: "By the same line of interpretation, Isaiah said the same thing: 'Before the child knew or advanced in evil, he chose the good', because he also said 'before the child knows good and to refuse evil, He chose the good.' For the word 'before' indicates that He had by nature what is good, not inquiring and deliberating as we do, but because He subsisted divinely by virtue of His very being."[55]

88. PYRRHUS: Virtues, then, are natural things?

89. MAXIMUS: Yes, natural things.

90. PYRRHUS: If they be natural things, why do they not exist in all men equally, since all men have an identical nature?

91. MAXIMUS: But they do exist equally in all men because of the identical nature!

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[54] Notably, this was precisely a previous argument advanced by Pyrrhus(cf. paragraph 22). It is important to realize in this connection, however, that St. Maximus' response to Monotheletism is not merely one-sided, for precisely by providing a place in his doctrine and terminology for that particular truth which Monotheletism sought to protect, i.e., the connection between will and person, and yet balancing it with the equal truth that the will is rooted in nature, he has avoided the opposite trap of Nestorianism.

[55] Isaiah 7:10





92. PYRRHUS: Then why is there such a great disparity[ of virtues] in us?

93. MAXIMUS: Because we do not all practice what is natural to us to an equal degree; indeed, if we [all] practiced equally [those virtues] natural to us as we were created to do, then one would be able to perceive one virtue in us all, just as there is one nature [in us all], and that "one virtue" would not admit of a "more" or "less".[56]

94. PYRRHUS: If virtue be something natural [to us], and if what is natural to us existeth not through asceticism but by reason of our creation, then why is it that we acquire the virtues, which are natural, with asceticism and labours?

95. MAXIMUS: Asceticism, and the toils that go with it, was devised simply in order to ward off deception, which established itself through sensory perception. It is not [as if] the virtues have been newly introduced from outside, for they inhere in us from creation, as hath already been said.[57] Therefore, when deception is completely expelled, the soul immediately exhibits the splendor of

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[56] This is a key to the spiritual teaching of the Confessor. In the *Gnostic Chapters*, 58, he speaks of the "well-ordered cosmos of virtues". These, in their distinct plenitude are nevertheless all equally virtuous. One virtue is neither "more" nor "less" virtuous than another.

[57] This, along with Pyrrhus' remarks in paragraph 34, is yet another example of the resonances of Augustine which seem constantly to hover in the background of the Disputation. The implications of St. Maximus' remarks would be clearly to deny any notion of a "sin nature" or of a "character" or grace which is introduced into man from outside his nature, both of which are positions that arose later in the Christian West as implications of its received Augustinism. It would be difficult to believe that St. Maximus, living as he did for a long period in North Africa, could have remained ignorant of the character and writings of North Africa's most illustrious Latin father much less have failed to respond in some degree to them.

its natural virtue. For example: he that is not foolish is intelligent, he that is not cowardly is bold, he that is not intemperate is temperate, and he that is not unrighteousness is a righteous man. Reason, in a natural state, is prudence; the faculty of judgement, in a natural state, is justice; anger, is courage; desire, temperance. Consequently, with the removal of things that are contrary to nature only the things proper to nature are manifest. Just as when rust is removed the natural clarity and glint of iron [are manifest].

96. PYRRHUS: Hence, those [Fathers] who say that there was a gnomic will in Christ greatly blaspheme.

97. MAXIMUS: But let us not overlook the fact that the term 'gnomic' hath many different meanings in the Holy Scriptures and in the Holy Fathers, as is clear to any who read them with care. Sometimes this same [term] meaneth advice and opinion, as when the Apostle [St. Paul] saith 'now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord, yet I give my opinion.'[58] And sometimes it meaneth counsel, as when the blessed David saith "They have taken crafty counsel against thy people."[59] And [sometimes] it is used to mean decree, as when Daniel, great amongst the prophets, saith that "the shameless decree issued forth from the King's person."[60] And sometimes it meaneth belief or faith, or viewpoint, as when Gregory the Theologian saith in his first oration *On the Son* "but since to rebuke others is a matter of no difficulty whatsoever but a very easy thing, which anyone who likes may do, and whereas to substitute one's own belief for theirs is the part of a pious and intelligent man."[61] And briefly, so as not to

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[58] *I Cor* 7:25

[59] Psalm 83:3

[60] Daniel 2:13

[61] St. Gregory the Theologian(Nazianzus), *Theological Oration*, I, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Volume VII, p. 301.





have to go through all the meanings proper to that term one by one, piling them into a heap, I have discovered twenty-eight meanings of the word "gnomie" in the Holy Scriptures and in the Holy Fathers. [Gnomie] doth not have an unvarying general or specific meaning. Its sense is rather determined by the context. Because of this, it is impossible to determine only one meaning for the term.

98. PYRRHUS: Then how is it possible for an indefinite term with so many meanings to be indicative of some one thing?

99. MAXIMUS: In order to make more explicit the shameful nature of this heresy, let us examine another similar proposition.

100. PYRRHUS: If thou wilt, then let us examine it.

101. MAXIMUS: Those who say that there is one will, whether it be freely-choosing, or gnomic, or self-determining, or whatever else they wish to call it(for we will not argue about that) must say whether it be divine, angelic, or human. And in the final analysis, regardless of which one they choose, they will still say that it is natural, since each of these names signifieth an existing nature, and what they sought to avoid by making such distinctions, they will be shown to uphold by the use of analysis. At any rate, to continue [in this line of thought], if they say that this will is divine, then they regard Christ as God alone by nature. If, on the other hand, they say that this will is angelic, then they regard Him neither as divine nor human, but as an angelic nature. And if they say that it is human, then they proffer us a mere man subject to compulsion.

102. PYRRHUS: When they become involved in such absurdities they say that the will is neither gnomic nor natural, but that it existeth in us by reason of an aptitude. ἐπιτηδειότητι

ἐπιτηδειότης

103. MAXIMUS: Doth this aptitude exist in us by nature, or not by nature?

104. PYRRHUS: By nature.

105. MAXIMUS: Then once again, according to the principles of rational analysis, they shall be forced to say that the will is natural and they shall have gained nothing by speaking in this roundabout manner. And since aptitude produceth, through experience, a disposition and an execution of intention [in accordance with that disposition], then Christ also had, according to them, a habit of will[62] and an execution of intention acquired through experience, and He [therefore] advanced through ignorance before learning whatever He learnt. Why, then, do they reject Nestorius, yet firmly embrace his words and ideas? [It is] rather [the case] that those who say "one will" vindicate [his teachings], for their *Ekthesis* testifieth, advocateth, and decreeth "one will", which is [exactly] what Nestorius advocated: the doctrine of one will in two persons was invented by him.

106. Furthermore, those who have rejected the proposition that the will is natural must say either that it is hypostatic or contrary to nature. but if they say it is hypostatic, then the Son shall have a different will than the Father, for a characteristic of any given hypostasis characterizeth only that [particular] hypostasis.[63] But if they [say the will is] contrary to nature, then they make Him destroy His own essence, since things contrary to nature destroy what is natural.

107. But I will gladly question them on this as well: doth the God and Father of all will as Father, or as God? But if He willeth as Father then His will is different from the will of the Son,

[62] The doctrine of a habit of will is suggestive, once again, of St. Augustine.

[63] In this St. Maximus clearly follows the triadological doctrine of the Cappadocian Fathers.





for the Father is not the Son. But if He willeth as God, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are God as well, then they must affirm that the will is [a property] of nature, in other words, natural.

108. Further, if the will be one, then, according to the teachings of the Fathers, the essence is one. So, if there be one will of the Godhead and humanity of Christ, then they are compelled to say that there is one and the same essence. How then, being so impious, can they follow the Fathers?

109. And again, if wherever there be one will there be no evident distinction of natures, then those who say that there is one will perforce do not make a distinction of natures in Christ. Conversely, they that affirm a distinction of natures do not affirm one will, provided that they observe the norms of the Fathers.

110. And again, if according to the same teachers, the two natures cannot both have the same will, then they must either admit that the two natures cannot have the same will in common, or else, if they say this, then they must oppose the rules and decisions of the Fathers.

111. PYRRHUS: Thou hast demonstrated with clarity and concision that their impious opinion entangles them in every manner of contradiction. But what are we to say when they attempt to prove their propositions from the Fathers?

112. MAXIMUS: Certainly if they wish to call 'Fathers' those who introduce division or confusion into the supernatural Economy, they are welcome to do so. For both groups[64] affirm one will, even though their [respective] positions are diametrically

[64] i.e., Nestorians and Monophysites.

opposed.[65] But if they are referring to the Fathers of the Church, we shall not allow them to say such a thing, because [the Fathers] proved many notable things, so that we may discern those who bring accusations against Christ God. So, by means of what expression canst thou clearly demonstrate this complete destruction of the mystery of the Incarnation? We [for our part] have a defense, in that we revere the Fathers in all things.

113. PYRRHUS: Why then doth Gregory the Theologian say "The will of that Man no one regards as supposed to God, since it was wholly deified?"[66] Is this not opposed [to the notion that He had] two wills?

114. MAXIMUS: By no means. on the contrary, it is more clear evidence of the duality of wills, and of all the other natural [properties].

115. PYRRHUS: How canst thou say this?

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65 cf. *Opuscule 2*, PG 40-45 and note 47 above. Basically, the Confessor's point is that the Nestorians maintain that there are two persons, the divine "Word" and the man "Jesus" united in presenting one "aspect"(or "person") of union: "Christ". This union is effected by the will of each underlying person cooperating in one *object of will*, i.e., man's salvation. Thus, Nestorianism might be characterized as a kind of split personality, the only union being simply in object of will. In this, Nestorianism is Monothelete, both because it roots will in person, and because there is one object of will which results from the contract between the two underlying persons who agree to it. Converely, Monophysitism and Monotheletism root the will in hypostasis, but maintain that there is only one nature or hypostasis respectively, and thus only one will. The two positions thus bear superficial resemblances to each other, yet in reality they are "diamatrically opposed."

66 St. Gregory The Theologian, *Third Oration: On the Son*, XII, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Volume VII, p. 313.





116. MAXIMUS: When one saith "fire" one presupposeth that which burns and that which is burnt; when one saith "cool" one presupposes that which is made cool and that which cooleth; when one speaketh of walking one presupposeth a walker and [the space] in which one walketh; when one saith "sight" one presupposeth that which is seen and a seer; when one saith "conception" one presupposeth that which is thought and a thinker, for it is not possible to know or to talk about a relationship without distinguishing the things that are related. So it is appropriate to distinguish that which is deified and that which deifieth. Otherwise, if the deification of the will be opposed to the notion that there are two wills, then the deification of the nature excludeth the existence of the two natures. But in both cases this father used the same word "deification".

117. PYRRHUS: This expression of the Fathers hath been shown to be altogether compatible with [the doctrine of] two wills, but it is also necessary to prove that Gregory of Nyssa agreeth with him. For they argue that he regarded the will as one, from the fact that he saith "The soul [of Christ] wills, the body [of the sick man] is touched, and on account of both the sickness flees."[67] They maintain that this father said that the soul of the Lord willed with the divine will of the Godhead which was united with it by hypostasis.

118. MAXIMUS: Then by the same [kind of argument] the body might be said to have been touched with a divine touch, and so the Godhead will be subject to touch. For what they say of

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67 St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomius*, II:13. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Second Series, Volume V, p. 127:

"We might cite many passages of Scripture to support such a position, showing how the Lord, reconciling the world to Himself by the Humanity of Christ, apportioned His work of benevolence to men between His soul and His body, willing through the soul and touching them through His body."

the soul of the Lord applieth equally to the body, leading them into an error of the worst possible kind.

119. PYRRHUS: Thou hast completely and concisely demonstrated the blasphemy of such an interpretation [of Gregory of Nyssa]. But what shall we say concerning the quotations from the great Athanasius to which they refer? For example: "the mind of the Lord is not actually the Lord, but it is will, choice, or operation directed to a particular object."[68]

120. MAXIMUS: This too they adduce against themselves, for the true doctrine everywhere utilizeth their own arguments to refute what they themselves say. For truth is never so impoverished as to need to employ its own weapons against its opponent. If according to this father the "mind of the Lord is not actually the Lord" then doubtless His mind is something else than the Lord altogether, that is to say, the mind of the Lord is not by nature Lord, nor God. It is believed that it was made His own as regards the hypostasis, and this is evident from what follows: "It is will, choice, or operation directed to a particular object." In reference to this point, [Athanasius] is utilizing the rule of Clement, the philosopher of philosophers, in the sixth of the *Stromateis* that defined the will as a mind desiring something, and purpose as a reasonable desire, or a will directed to some particular object. The phrase "operation with reference to some thing", however, the divine doctor employed because in all His divine actions He made use of the rational and intellectual soul hypostatically united to Him.

121. PYRRHUS: Indeed, in the very arguments whereby they imagine they can refute the true faith, they themselves are refuted without knowing it. But it is necessary to

[68] St. Athanasius, *On the Incarnation of the Word*,





examine another expression which they adduce from this father, so as not to leave them any pretext for denying the truth.

122. MAXIMUS: Which one is that? I am not familiar with it.

123. PYRRHUS: The one in which that wonderful man saith: "he was born from a woman, having raised up in Himself the form of man from the first creation, without carnal wills and human thoughts, in an image of newness. For the will is of the Godhead only."[69]

124. MAXIMUS: This is self-explanatory. It is not necessary to seek the aid of the principles of interpretation.

125. PYRRHUS: How, then can they interpret it in [such a] questionable manner?

126. MAXIMUS: Out of much ignorance. For it is obvious to everyone, unless the eye of one's soul is completely blind, that it was not said in reference to the natural principle, but concerning the mode of existence proper to His flesh. The father went over this point thoroughly, wishing to show that the Incarnation was the work of the divine will alone, of the good pleasure of the Father, the Son accomplishing it in Himself, and the Holy Spirit cooperating,[70] and [that it] is not the work of the carnal motion and of human thoughts, in other words, [the work] of the sexual union of marriage. For the God of all, having become man,

[69] There is no record of this in the *Stromateis* of Clement.

[70] These are the three modes of willing of the divine will of the Trinity. The formulation is that of St. Sophronius of Jerusalem.

did not alter the principle of [human] nature, since if He had, He could not still have been a man without the perfect and immutable principle of all [human] nature. Rather, He altered the mode [of its τρόπος existence], that is to say, its conception by means of seed, and the corruption that cometh through birth.[71] Thus the godly-minded doctors of the Church by no means denied the natural principles of the [natures] that had been united [in Him], but in concordance with the Evangelists, apostles, and Prophets, said that our Lord Jesus Christ, for our salvation, possessed that will and activity proper to each of His natures.

127. PYRRHUS: Is it possible to prove this from the Old and New Testaments?

128. MAXIMUS: Of course it is, for the Fathers were not moved by their own opinions. Rather, having learned from them, they taught this to us as well, out of their love for man. For it was not they who were speaking, but the grace of the Spirit which completely interpenetrated them.

129. PYRRHUS: Since thou, in an imitation of the divine goodness, hast made it thine intention to benefit us, and hast given thyself to the labor of this inquiry, do not draw back, but instruct us about this point as well.

130. MAXIMUS: In the Holy Gospels it is said of the Lord that "one the day following, Jesus would go forth into Galilee."[72] So, as it is apparent that He willed to come there, inasmuch as He was not already there, then it is obvious that He was "not there" according to His humanity, for His Godhead was absent from no place. Consequently, He willed to come into that

[71] cf. *Theological and Polemical Works, Opuscule 4*, PG 41-45.

[72] St. John 1:43





place as man, and not as God. And therefore He possessed the will which is proper to man. And elsewhere again, "I will that where I am, these may be also."[73] If Christ, as God, be beyond place, for as God He is not in any place, and if it be impossible that the created nature should be beyond place, then He willeth according to that [nature] which He is as man, in order that where He is "these may be also." Therefore, He possesseth the will [which is] proper to man.

131. And elsewhere again: "And coming into a place, He said, 'I thirst'. And they gave Him wine mixed with gall; and tasting it, He would not drink."[74] Of which part of Him is it said that He thirsted? If the Godhead, then His Godhead is subject to passion by reason of its desiring drink in a manner contrary to its own nature. If the humanity, then according to that nature with which He thirsted He also willed not to drink that which was not fit for [that] nature [to drink].

132. And elsewhere again it saith: "And Jesus walked in Galilee, for He would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him."[75] If the act of walking is in the nature of the flesh, and not in [that of] the Godhead which is united hypostatically to it, then the same Person willed by that which He was as man, and as man He willed to walk in Galilee, and willed not to walk in Judea, and therefore He possesseth the faculty of will proper to that humanity.

133. And elsewhere again, "And they departed thence, and passed through Galilee, and He would not that any man should know it."[76] It is generally agreed that journeying is proper to Christ's humanity, not to His deity. if journeying be confessed to

[73] St. John 17:24

[74] St. Matthew 27:34

[75] St. John 7:1

[76] St. Mark 9:30

be proper to that which He was as man, but not proper to that which He was as God, then it was as man that He would "that no man should know." Therefore He possessed the faculty of will proper to that which He was as man.

134. And yet elsewhere: "And from then He arose, and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into an house, and would have no man know it, but He could not be hid."[77] If Christ as God was self-existing power, and as man was weakness -- for "He was crucified," saith the divine apostles, "from weakness, but He lives by the power of God"[78] -- then the "coming into a house" and His willing "that no man should know it" and furthermore, his inability to escape detection were proper to that which he was as man, and not to His godhead. Hence the same Person possessed that faculty of will proper to that which He was as man. And elsewhere again it saith "about the fourth watch of the night, He cometh to them, walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them."[79] If one understands this to be said in reference to His deity, then one is obliged to say that the Godhead is circumscribed by bodily limits, by "above" and "below", "before" and "after", "right" and "left." Conversely, if these things be said of Him as man, then the same Person possessed the faculty of will proper to His humanity.

135. And yet elsewhere it saith "and the disciples said unto Him saying,'Where wilt thou have us go and prepare for you to eat the passover?'"[80] If the food of the Passover be one of the things commanded by the law, and the Lord was subject to the Law as man and not as God, then He willed to eat the Passover in His humanity and therefore possessed that faculty of will proper to that which He was as man.

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[77] St. Mark 7:24

[78] II Corinthians 13:4

[79] St. Mark 6:48

[80] St. Mark 14:12





136. And the divine apostle, in the epistle to the Hebrews, saith of Him that "He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."[81] So, did He obey willingly, or unwillingly? If "unwillingly" then it is reasonable to say that [He was] not [really] obedient [at all, but subject to compulsion], which is tyranny. If "willingly" then He became obedient, not in His deity, but in His humanity, for "neither obedience nor disobedience are proper to the deity, according to the Fathers. For these things are appropriate to those in an inferior position, and under subjection," as the divine Gregory saith.[82] Thus He possesseth that faculty of will proper to humanity.

137. And the blessed David saith in the thirty-ninth Psalm: "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire, but a body hast thou prepared for me. Burnt offering and sin offering thou hast not required. Then said I, lo, I come. In the volume of the book it is written for me, I delight to do thy will, O my God."[83] On the one hand, the Father was Christ's God according to the humanity and not according to His deity, just as He is Christ's Father according to His deity and not according to that which He is as man. He thus delights to do the will of the Father, not according to His deity, but according to His humanity, for the Father's will is also His will, since He is also God by essence. And if this be so, then as God He not only possessed a will consubstantial with the Father, but as man He also possessed a will consubstantial with us.

138. We should also observe that the divine apostle applies the words just cited from the Psalm to the Lord in the Epistle to the Hebrews. The great Moses, in the account of the creation of man, introduced God as saying "Let us make man in our

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[81] Philippians 2:8, St. Maximus has misquoted the reference.

[82] St. Gregory of Nazianzus: *Fourth Theological Oration(second Oration on the Son)*, 6: "In His character of the Word He was neither obedient nor disobedient. For such expressions belong to servants, and inferiors..." *(Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Second Series, Volume VII, p. 311.)

[83] Psalm 40:6-7

image and after our likeness."[84] If man be the image of the divine nature, and the divine nature be self-determining, then so is the image; since the image preserveth its likeness to the archetype, it too must be self-determining by nature. And if Christ is become both the archetype and the image by nature, then the same Person, subsisting in both His natures possesseth also the will proper to both natures. For it hath been demonstrated previously out of the Fathers that the will is the self-determination proper to [a rational] nature.

139. And it is necessary to realize that the term "self-determination", as well as the term "nature", is used in different senses when referring to God, when referring to man, and when referring to angels. It is used of God super-essentially, and of angels to denote the convergence between intention and habit without any intervening interval of time. But in men there is such an interval of time. For if Adam when willing had obeyed, or while willing, considered, and after willing ate, then the faculty of will is the first thing in us that became subject to passion. So, if according to them the Word when He became incarnate did not have this [faculty of will] along with the nature, then I shall never be set free from sin. And if I cannot be freed from sin, then I have not been saved, since what is not assumed is not healed.[85]

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[84] Genesis 1:26

[85] St. Maximus employs the "soteriological paradigm" of St. Gregory Nazianzus:

"If anyone has put his trust in Him as a Man without a human mind, he is really bereft of mind, and quite unworthy of salvation. For that which He has not assumed He has not healed; but that which is united to His Godhead is also saved. If only half Adam fell, then that which Christ assumes and saves may be half also; but if the whole of his nature fell, it must be united to the whole nature of Him that was begotten, and so be saved as a whole."(Letter 101, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Second Series, Volume VII, p. 440)





140. And thus, if the self-determinative power of nature existeth as His work and creation, and if --as they say-- the Word when becoming incarnate did not assume this together with the nature in the ineffable union -- then He either condemns His own creation as something which is not good, or He begrudgeth us the healing of our will, depriving us of complete salvation, and showeth Himself as being subject to passion because He is either unwilling, or unable, to save completely.

141. So much then for the point that God the Word incarnate is by nature endowed with a will as God, for we may learn this from the following. Our Lord and God Himself, the only Truth, saith of Himself in the Gospels, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, How often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate."[86] Clearly He did not say this of His humanity, since He had [only recently] become man, but of His deity, indicating the manifold modes of His wise providence towards man, whereby He willed to gather [human] nature from its former error, but it did not consent.

142. And again it saith elsewhere: "For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom He will."[87] If the word "so" be an adverb of comparison, and the things compared are consubstantial, then it is not possible to say that this referreth to the human nature of Christ. Thus the Saviour taught us that just as the Father, being God, giveth life to the dead by His will, so also the Son, being of identical essence and will with the Father, giveth life to whom He will. These

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St. Maximus' point is that if Christ had no human will then salvation would be denied to that portion of human nature which, being the root of the Fall through Adam's gnomic misuse of it and thus subject to the ensuing corruption of human nature, was most in need of salvation.

[86] St. Matthew 23:37, St. Luke 13:34

[87] St. John 5:21

are the dogmas of the Evangelists, Apostles, and Prophets. So what greater proof that He hath the faculty of will proper both to His deity and to His humanity could there be than this?

143. PYRRHUS: Nothing could be clearer than this proof that the wills are natural. How then could Vigilius, the bishop at that time presiding over the Roman Church, accept that *Libellus* issued by Menas at the imperial capital and shown to him at the imperial council chamber, and which said that Christ had one will?[88]

144. MAXIMUS: I am shocked at how, though thou art a Patriarch, thou darest to tell lies! Thy predecessor, writing to Honorius, said that "he, [Vigilius], had received [only] information about the *Libellus*, but that it was not delivered or clearly shown [to him]." But thou thyself hast said, in thine epistle to Pope John, now among the saints, that it "was delievered and shown [to him], having been read by Constantine the Quaestor." Whom are we to believe, thee, or thy predecessor? You cannot both be correct.

145. PYRRHUS: Did my predecessor really write in such a manner?

146. MAXIMUS: He did.

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88 *Libellus* of Menas: Menas was consecrated Patriarch of Constantinople by Pope Agapetus of Rome in 536. He subsequently vacillated towards Monophysitism and caused his opponents to complain to Agapetus' successor, Pope Vigilius. In the ensuing tension between Rome and Constantinople, the Emperor forcibly brought Vigilius to Constantinople where the two Patriarchs promptly excommunicated each other.





147. PYRRHUS: Let us leave the question of Vigilius. What dost thou say of Honorius, who clearly taught one will of Our Lord Jesus Christ in his letter to me predecessor?

148. MAXIMUS: Who is a more trustworthy interpreter of such an epistle? The one that actually wrote it for Honorius, the one who at that time was still alive, and who, in addition to all his other virtues, illumined the whole West with godly dogmas? Or is it those in Constantinople who [interpret it in accordance with] the whim of their own hearts?

149. PYRRHUS: The one who actually composed the letter.

150. MAXIMUS: This same person afterwards wrote for Pope John(who is among the saints) to Constantine, just after he had become Emperor[89] regarding the very same [letter of Honorius]. He explained that "We say one will of the Lord, not of the Godhead and humanity, but only of the humanity. For Sergius hath written: 'As some say that the two wills of Christ are opposed, we in response write that Christ did not have two opposing wills, as of flesh and of spirit, as we ourselves have since the Fall, but one only, that which characterized His humanity by virtue of nature.'"[90] And the clear proof of this is the fact that he writeth of limbs and flesh, which means that we cannot apply what he saith unto the Godhead. Straight away, in anticipation of objections, he saith, "And if someone saith 'Why, when speaking of the humanity of Christ, did you not refer to the Godhead as well?' we reply, for the first part, that our answer was made to a specific question; and for the second part, that there, as ever, we have followed the practice of Scripture. For sometimes it speaketh concerning His Godhead

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89 Constantine III: Emperor in 641.

90 For St. Maximus the Fall of man is precisely a Fall into a dialectic of oppositions. cf. Introduction pp.

only, as when the apostle saith 'Christ the power of God and wisdom of God', and sometimes concerning only His humanity, as when the apostle saith 'the foolishness of God is stronger than men', and what is weak in God is stronger then men."[91]

151. PYRRHUS: Mr predecessor, misled by [the pope's] manner of writing, understood it in a somewhat naive fashion.

152. MAXIMUS: I speak truly when I say that nothing so appalled me about thy predecessor as his inconsistency. He was wont to change his mind from time to time, and not to persist in one line of thought. At one time he proposed the formula "one divine will" and thus imposed the opinion that the Incarnate is God alone. At another time he proposed that it is "deliberative", making Him a mere man, for he who is subject to deliberation as we are differeth in no way from Pyrrhus and Maximus! And yet another time he saith it is "hypostatic", thus introducing by the distinction of hypostases distinct wills within identical natures. And yet even another time he accepteth [the opinion] of those who say that it is "self-determinative" and thus proposeth a relational union, because the individual's choice, sovereignty, and similar such things, are obviously things moved by gnomie, and not by nature. And at yet another time he admitteth the opinion the opinion of those who say that it is "freely choosing" and gnomic, and is thus [not content] to make the Lord simply a mere man, but a mutable and sinful man as well. Why? Because the gnomic is a judgement concerning opposing things, an inquiry into things still unknown, and a choice between uncertain things.[92] And yet again he proposeth the same things as those who say that it is "economical", thus introducing

[91] I Corinthians 1:24,25.

[92] Having established already that the gnomic will is the mode of willing proper to the created human hypostasis, St. Maximus then demonstrates that the attribution of a gnomic will to Christ would imply the existence of a human hypostasis in Him, thus making Him a "mere man".





another unsupportable doctrine, that before the Economy He was without a will.[93] He hath also proposed several other unsupportable opinions which have no basis in the truth. So, if I were to write down [all his other opinions] with exactitude, with all the absurdities that they entail, there would simply not be enough time. But what need was there for him to promulgate the documents which have caused [these] schisms in the Holy Church of God? He was not able to see what is obvious to everyone: either -- to grant the point to thee[for the sake of argument] -- they contain the dogmas of the councils, as thou dost falsely claim, and therefore we have no need of thy documents, for then as now we accept and embrace the Councils, or else they do not contain the teachings of the Councils, and so we should shun them and repeat [what the Councils defined]. Therefore, the abolition of their unjust and illegal character is just and canonical.

153. PYRRHUS: But Sophronius, who a short while before he became the Patriarch of Jerusalem, made us do this, even against our will, urging us to speak about the energies, although it was not a suitable occasion to do so.[94]

[93] That is, if the one will of the Incarnate Word was a result of the Economy, then it arose only at the moment of the Mother of God's *fiat voluntas tua*, and thus prior to the Incarnation the Word was without will.

[94] Pyrrhus is most likely referring to the events which transpired between St. Sophronius and Patriarch Cyrus of Alexandria, and with a certain tendentiousness. St. Sophronius had implored Cyrus of Alexandria not to sign the monenergistic document of union with the Monophysites. It was apparently St. Sophronius' elevation to the Patriarchate of Jerusalem in 634 that prompted Sergius to write Pope Honorius concerning the doctrine of one will. St. Sophronius convened a synod in Jerusalem and condemned those who spoke of only one energy. This is perhaps what Pyrrhus is referring to when he says that he was urged "to speak about the energies, although it was not a suitable occasion to do so."

154. MAXIMUS: I am altogether vexed! What kind of defense dost thou imagine thou art making by attacking this blameless man so bitterly? Tell me, in the name of the Truth, when Sergius wrote to Theodore of Pharan and sent him the *Libellus* of Menas through Sergius of Makarona, the bishop of Arsinoe, asking him to state what he thought of one energy and one will, and he wrote back accepting this teaching, where then is Sophronius? Where is Sophronius when Sergius wrote, quoting Severus, to Paul the one-eyed in Theodosiopolis, sending him the *Libellus* of Menas as well as his own consent to it and that of the Pharanite as well? Or [where is Sophronius] when he wrote to George the Arsan, a follower of Paul of Samosata, stating the same thing concerning the one operation, being self-inspired to state in that epistle that the union of all with the Church could be not be effected without this doctrine? But blessed Pope John of Alexandria took it from the Arsan's hand, choosing to effect its overthrow by this means. I was prevented from doing so at this time by the attack of the Persians in Egypt.[95] [Where is Sophronius] when [Sergius] himself wrote to Cyrus of Pasidos[96], asking him whether he thought there were one or two energies, and sending him the *Libellus* of Menas? What then? Since Sergius pursued this insanity in various ways, and to the very great destruction of the Church, the blessed Sophronius suggested to him, with humility and postrating himself before Cyrus, that he consider the quickening sufferings of Christ God, so that not one heretical expression, having once been extinguished by the holy Fathers, could again be renewed. Is [Sophronius] then made the cause of such great scandal?

155. PYRRHUS: What thou hast said adequately refutes all the points advanced. Our discussion of the two wills is now complete.

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[95] The Persian attack occurred in 634 and was the immediate cause of the Emperor Heraclius' subsequent and successful campaigns against Persia.

[96] Cyrus, i.e., Cyrus the Patriarch of Alexandria.





156. MAXIMUS: Since this inquiry concerning the wills hath reached a conclusion, dost thou wish us to discuss the energies as well?

157. PYRRHUS: Since I did not realize that the wills are natural, I accordingly accepted the same [view] about the energies. And whatsoever I have said, whether written or unwritten, is to be interpreted accordingly. Since we agree that "to will" is something that belongeth to nature, and since "to act" is an aspect of willing, and therefore also belongeth to nature, let all falsely expressed vies of this subject be regarded as cancelled. I therefore regard it as superfluous to discuss the matter further.

158. MAXIMUS: How so? If God, by means of our choice which was foreknown to Him,[97] called us to the knowledge

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[97] This would appear to make St. Maximus' understanding of the relationship between foreknowledge and foreordination that of classical infralapsarianism, and would again suggest a familiarity with the Augustinian/Pelagian/Semi-Pelagian debates, at least in their broad outlines. However, it should be noted that the *Life* contains statements diametrically opposite to these:

"When they had arrived, accompanied by the Bishop of Bizya, and commanded the Saint to sit down, Bishop Theodosius addressed him with these words: 'How do you fare, my lord, Abba Maximus?'

"He replied, 'Just as the Lord knoew before the ages and foreordained the circumstances of my life, which is guarded by His Providence.'

"To this Theodosius objected, 'How can this be? Has God really foreknown and foreordained the acts of each of us before the ages?'

"Saint Maximus said, '*If He foreknew, assuredly He also foreordained.*'

"Theodosius said, 'What does it mean 'He foreknew, He foreordained'?'

"The Saint replied, 'His foreknowledge pertains to our thoughts, words, and deeds which are within our power, but His predestination pertains to that which befalls us and is not in our power.'

"Bishop Theodosius asked, 'What is in our power, and what is not?'

"Saint Maximus replied, 'You know all these things, my lord, and only ask me in order to try me, your servant.'

"The Bishop said, 'In truth I do not know, and I wish to understand what is the difference between that which is in our power and that which is not, and how one pertains to the divine foreknowledge and the other to the divine predestination."

"Saint Maximus replied, 'All our good and bad deeds depend on our will, but the chastisements and disasters that befalls us, as well as their opposites, are beyond our power. in truth, we have no power over a disease which is wearing us away, or over our health, but only over those conditions which bring about sickness or preserve health. So also, keeping God's commandments is cause for our attaining to the Heavenly Kingdom, and not keeping them is cause for us to be cast into the Gehenna of fire.'"(*The Life of Our Holy Father Maximus the Confessor*, trans. Fr. Christopher Birchall, Holy Transfiguration Monastery, pp. 17-18.)





of His truth, is it not necessary to examine thy "written" and "unwritten" expression dealing with this point, since one might discover some unguarded [expression] in them, or some even more reckless [doctrine]?

159. PYRRHUS: If the examination hath that as its aim, it is necessary. For to care for the more simple is an imitation of the divine love for man.

160. MAXIMUS: If it be an imitation of the divine love for man, let us begin the examination forthwith!

161. PYRRHUS: I agree.

162. MAXIMUS: I have discovered in thy writing that thou dost teach one energy of Christ, considered as a single whole. If, therefore, the energy be one, as of a whole thing, and what is whole is His hypostasis, then this one energy is hypostatic. Likewise, He must have a different energy than His Father or His Mother, since His hypostasis is different from both of them.

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The italicized sentence in the above quotation from the *Life* of St. Maximus is paralleled in St. Augustine(*Ad Romanos Expositio 8:29*), and indeed the whole tenor of the quotation would appear to contradict the "infralapsarian" tone of the passage in the *Disputation*. However strong the terminological and thematic resemblance to St. Augustine, however, it must be placed in the whole context of St. Maximus' eschatological doctrine of free choice. The *logoi* in which the heavenly volitional choice of the saints is exercised are, in words which the Confessor borrows from St. Dionysius, "divine predeterminations and wills."(*Ambigua* 7, PG 91: 1085A). As such they are strictly speaking "not within our power", but nevertheless constitute the ultimate objects of our will. (cf. the discussion on pp. 109-115, 131-154 in my *Free Choice in St. Maximus the Confessor*.)

163. PYRRHUS: If thou sayest there are two energies on account of the distinction of the two natures in Christ, and not one [energy] on account of the singularity of the Person, then thou must also discover two energies of humanity because of that distinction between the soul and the body, which is [an] essential [distinction]. And if this be so, then there will be three energies of Christ, and not two.

164. MAXIMUS: The very point which thou dost allege as a negation of the natural [properties] also stretches out to engulf the natures in the same negation], for this [doctrine] of thine also implieth those things with it. Whereas, we shall also introduce thee to proofs from the Fathers, seeing that thou hast such an excessive fondness for what they say. Wherefore, if thou sayest, as we do, that there be two natures of Christ in the one hypostasis by means of the distinction between soul and body, which are also two natures,[98] then there shall be three natures of Christ and not two. And if thou sayest as we do that there are two and not three natures of Christ, how canst thou maintain that there are two energies on account of the distinction of natures, for shall there not then be three energies united [in one hypostasis]? For what thou sayest about the natures of Christ against us also aideth us against thee in the matter concerning the energies. This principle consequently proves to be equally uncertain and ambiguous. But we said that this unity is not proper to the form of man, but is the unity proper to the essence of body and soul. If the unity be proper to the form of man on the one hand, then the indistinguishability of that nature is proven, in spite of the particular [energies of body and soul]. It is for this reason that we said of man [that he hath one energy], and we did so not without support, rather, we adduced support for it. Contrariwise, thou wouldst mishandle the unity of body and soul,

[98] The question of the nature of the union between man's soul and body was one of the centers of the christological debate between St. Cyril of Alexandria and Nestorius. Nestorius held that there were only three kinds of union: 1) the essential union between the Three Hypostases of the Holy Trinity; 2) the union between body and soul; and 3) the "relational" and volitional conjunction of the Word and the man Jesus into one "aspect".





and push it into complete non-existence. If this unity which is proper to the essence of body and soul be not proper to Him, then it is, of necessity, not proper to us. Thus, one must say either that the one energy [of the humanity] is proper to the form, and is therefore hypostatic, or else that there are three energies because the energies are proper to nature.

165. PYRRHUS: But according to the Nestorius, persons are introduced with energies, so of necessity, those who say that there are two energies vindicate his polluted dogmas.

166. MAXIMUS: Did not Nestorius, who indeed maintained that there were two persons, rather say that there was but *one* energy? But according to what thou sayest, if persons be introduced along with the energies, and *vice versa*, energies with persons, then thou art compelled, following the same principles, either to say that because of the one operation of the Holy Godhead there is one Person as well, or because of its Three Hypostases that there are three operations.[99]

167. Or thou mightest maintain that their union is relational, as Nestorius said [of Christ], for the one energy **was** the union, as Nestorius and his party maintained in their writings. For all these reasons thou must say that since operation is proper to the form that there are as many human hypostases [as energies], or that since there is one energy of the genus "man" that there is likewise one person for all men. Or that since there are many persons there are also many energies. In this the principles "beings of the same

[99] Again, the Confessor insists that if energy and will are hypostatic features and not natural properties, then the whole patristic *ordo theologiae* is overthrown and the doctrine of God itself will reduce to one or another dialectically opposed alternative: to a Sabellian "Mono-Personal God" or to a Tritheism.

essence have the same energy"[100] asserted by the Fathers is nullified.

168. Moreover, if, as thou sayest, a person be introduced with an operation, and thou yet supportest [the fact that] many energies proceed from the same Person of God the Word Incarnate, then thou must also support as many persons [in Christ] as there are energies. So His Persons and His energies are found to be infinite![101]

169. Furthermore, if, according to their proposition, a person be introduced with an operation, then surely with the destruction of the one cometh the destruction of the other. If this in turn be true, then with the destruction either of the one or of the two energies cometh also the destruction both of the one and of the two persons in Christ! And so Christ is sundered, on their own principle, from existence and hyper-existence [and pushed] into non-existence![102] How could anything be more impious?

170. And if were to examine from the many superabundances of what each one of us [does], one shall discover that we can both think and walk at one and the same time, or that we can think one thing and say something else to those present, as when Moses simultaneously made intercessions with God on behalf of the people, and reasoned with the people by urging them with

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[100] cf. St. Basil, *Letter 38*.

[101] This argument was to be repeated again in the ninth century by St. Photius in response to the Latin exegesis of passages which refer to the Holy Spirit being the Spirit "of Wisdom," or "of Truth" and so on as indicating an eternal procession of the Spirit from the Son, since the Son *is* Wisdom and Truth. Again, energies have been confused with Persons(cf. St. Photius, *Mystagogy 56, 58*).

[102] This section is not to be misunderstood as being merely a rhetorical *reductio ad absurdum*, for St. Maximus the principle that natures must have their own proper energies in order to exist is one of the cardinal principles he is defending.





gentle persuasion. He is not for this reason two persons, one succeeding the other, simply because he acted dually in the natural fitness of his nature, nor doth he consent to compound the two natural operations of his natural motions into one. By a similar principle, we can observe their complete interpenetration into each other: conception inhering in reason and reason assuming conception.[103] Neither are distinct persons introduced because of distinct operations, nor on account of their highest union are the distinct operations mixed. And what of the example that some [Fathers] give of a red-hot sword? Doth it apply to the natures only, that is, to fire and iron? Or doth the example extend to their natural operations, in other words, the burning and the cutting, which demonstrate externally the [duality of operations] and their [unity] simultaneously? For neither is this sword's burning, after the union, independent of the cutting, nor the cutting independent of the burning. Neither are two red-hot swords introduced because of the duality of the natural operations, nor is a mixture of the essential distinctions effected on account of the red-hot sword's singularity.

171. PYRRHUS: But the *agent*, it is not one?

172. MAXIMUS: Certainly it is.

173. PYRRHUS: If the agent be one, then the operation must also be one, as of one [hypostasis].

174. MAXIMUS: Christ Himself is one. But thou hast returned again to what hath already been said, so again I will ask, is He one by hypostasis, or nature?

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[103] That is, reason as the faculty, and conception as its activity, are not identical things, and yet imply the other.

175. PYRRHUS: By hypostasis, for by nature He is dual.

176. MAXIMUS: Then doth the same Person operate dually by means of the duality of natures, or singly, by reason of the singularity of the hypostasis? If the same one Person operateth dually, then the fact that there is more than one energy doth not imply that there is likewise more than one Person. But if thous sayest that He acteth singly by reason of the singularity of the Person, [then I remind thee] that this doctrine hath [already] been shown to be absurd; the same absurdities still hold for the same reasons, for if energy be hypostatic, then with a multitude of hypostases a multitude of distinct energies will have to be asserted.

177. PYRRHUS: It doth not necessarily follow that since He operateth dually, He hath two energies; but since the agent is one, the energy is also one.

178. MAXIMUS: Someone else could say to thee that [it was not because] His nature is dual that He was said to have two natures, but rather because His hypostasis was one that it was said that His nature was one. Nevertheless, to pass over everything that might also be said here, [I will ask]: Thou sayest that there is one energy; what sort of energy dost thou judge this to be, divine, or human, or neither of the two? If divine, then thou sayest that Christ is God only, but if human and not God at all, then thou sayest He is a mere man only, but if neither of the two, nether God nor man, then thou dost teach a non-existent Christ.

179. PYRRHUS: We who say there is one energy of the Godhead and humanity of Christ say that this belongeth to him, not by virtue of the principle of nature, but because of the mode of union.





180. MAXIMUS: According to the doctrine, if the energy came into existence at the time of the union, then before the union He was without energy. So according to thee, when He created He acted from compulsion. Furthermore, if the operation came into existence at the time of the union, then the Father and the Holy Ghost were not active because they were not hypostatically united to the flesh. And if they were not active, then neither are they Creators. So it is not *I* who say that they are incomplete!

181. And again, since the union is relational, and not a real object, then this energy of Christ is a relationship, not a real object.

182. Thou art also forced to state whether this energy be created or Uncreate, since in general nothing existeth between the created an the Uncreate [natures]. If thou sayest it is created, then it is perfectly clear that His nature is created only. Conversely, if thou sayest Uncreate, then it characterizeth only the Uncreate nature. It is surely necessary for natural things to correspond with [their appropriate] natures, for how it is possible for the energy of a created nature to be Uncreate, without beginning, infinite, creative, and sustaining? And the reverse: how is it possible for the Uncreate and eternal nature to be created, a thing made, tried and compelled by other things?[104]

183. PYRRHUS: Dost thou not accept and agree with those who say that the effect of Christ's actions is one energy?

184. MAXIMUS: Different actions have different effects, not one effect, as was demonstrated by the example of the sword being hardened by fire. If the operation of the sword and

[104] This is yet another argument against the dialectical and Neoplatonic implications of Origenism: if the One can only be One by having the Many over against it, so the Creator, according to origen, can only be Creator by having creatures over against Him in order that He may *be* Creator.

that of the fire are both mutually united, and yet we observe that the fire's effect is burning and the iron's effect is cutting -- even though they are not distinguished in the burning cut or the cutting burn, just as the effect of heaven, earth, and the sun are different from one another -- then it is not possible to say that there is one work[105] unless there is only one action. Thus, if thou dost maintain that the effect of one energy is several distinct works by Christ, thou must also maintain one action. Or if thou dost teach an innumerable number of actions, then thou must also teach that the energies are innumerable. But our inquiry is not about the works, for we are not discussing things external to Christ, but about things within Christ Himself, that is to say, about the natural principles of the essences of Christ, whether He remained defective from the union or not. If He was defective, then it is possible for a nature that is defective [in a natural energy] to be genuinely existent. If it be not defective, then the energy is either understood to be a component of the principle of the essence[106] or it is acquired from those things external to Him. If the energy proper to nature be not acquired from external sources, then it is possible either for a nature to exist without actions, or the converse will be true: a nature can neither be conceived nor can it exist without the

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105 The energy, or natural operation and activity, is to be strictly distinguished from its works or effects in the same way that the will and the object of the will are two distinct things. As St. Athanasius observes in the *Second Discourse Against the Arians*, 62, even though the will is a natural property, and hence consubstantial with the nature, its effects are not necessarily so:

"A man by counsel builds a house, but by nature he begets a son; and what is in building began to come into being at will, and is external to the maker; but the son is the proper offspring of the father's essence, and is not external to him.... As far then as the Son transcends the creature, by so much does what is by nature transcend the will."(*Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Second Series, Volume IV, pp. 427-428.)

106 Thus, energy and principle of essence are almost synonymous in St. Maximus, though not quite. Energy is related to the faculty of will as principle of essence is related to the faculty of reason.





energies proper to it. To believe this is to believe that He operateth in each nature naturally, and that they are not altered [thereby].

185. When thou didst teach the one energy, thou saidst nothing about the action, but spoke only of the natural principles of the united essences, and from this infallible faith thou didst produce a goat-stag![107] This was also taught by the chapters of Cyrus -- whom thou hast kindly and readily received -- in which he stated that He effecteth divine things and human things by one energy, contradicting not only the Holy Scriptures and the holy Fathers, but also the very nature of things that come to pass. For nothing which abideth in the things proper to its nature begets or fashions its opposite: fire doth not warm *and* cool, nor doth ice cool *and* warm, nor is the earth dried up and watered at the same time. If this doth not happen in the case of anything that exists, then how darest thou to say that the Incarnate Word could perform and undergo both the miracles and the sufferings, though these differ from each other in the principles of their nature, with only one energy?

186. PYRRHUS: Then what about the clear opposition of the godly conceptions of Cyril to the current inquiry? This great

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107 The Confessor means by this that the doctrine of one energy or operation being produced from two distinct natures will result in a hybrid combination of the operations of both natures, i.e., whenever two distinct things are made one in their effect or production, the inevitable result is a mixture of both. This argument is in fact repeated by St. Photios in his *Mystagogy* where it is argued that the Spirit, if considered as a production of, or as caused by, the Father *and* Son would be analogous to a centaur, orginating as He would from the Father's Uncaused Causality and the Son's caused causality(St. Photius, *Mystagogy 44*). The same principle holds true with regard to the two natures of Christ. Divine energies, such as ubiquity, would become merged with the spatio-temporal limitations of the human energies, resulting in a kind of "semi-ubiquity". Regardless of whether this principle of synthesis of distinct things into a *tertium quid* is applied christologically or triadologically, the results are as mythological as goat-stags and centaurs, since they are speculative creations of the human mind which go beyond the bounds of Revelation.

luminary of the Church clearly taught that Christ "exhibitted one energy of the same type in both natures."

187. MAXIMUS: The present expression doth not completely contradict the two operations, rather, it affirms them. For he did not say one *natural* energy of the Godhead and humanity of Christ, because he elsewhere saith that "those of sound mind do not support one energy of the Creator and creatures." He wanted to show that there is one energy of the Godhead both with and without the flesh, just as it is clear that there is one operation of fire both with and without matter. Thus, this father did not say that there is one operation of the two natures, but spoke of one energy in reference to the divine and Fatherly nature which really subsisted in God the Word Incarnate. He effected the miracles not only with an almighty command, incorporeally -- for He still hath the same operation as the Father even after the Incarnation -- but also effected them with the sense of touch, which is characteristic of the flesh, corporeally. For this [is what he meant when he said] "through each of the two". Similarly, the resuscitation of the child, or the restoration of sight to the blind man, of the blessing of the loaves of bread, or the cleansing of the leper, were effected by means of an omnipotent word and decree, and also corporeally by the sense of touch, as was proper to each nature, so that He might demonstrate that the flesh was life-giving flesh in that it was truly His own, and not that of any other, in its unmixed union with Him. The divine energy was made known in His deeds in both of these -- I mean the command and the touch -- and did not in any way impair the natural, passable, human energy of the flesh proper to us. Quite the contrary, it preserved its own proper manifestations, just as a soul, even though working through the instrument of the body and its own proper energy nevertheless preserveth its own natural energy. For the stretching out of the hand, the touch, the grasping, the mingling of spit and clay, the breaking of bread, and simply, anything which is brought to pass by the hand or any other part or limb of the body, proveth the existence of the natural energy of Christ's humanity. Accordingly, He Who is by nature God Himself was active also as man, naturally working divine things, so that through both He might be believed to be both perfect God and



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perfect man -- sin only excepted -- both being subject to true demonstration.

188. Hence, this father was not ignorant of what is included in the distinctive properties and attributes of each nature -- I mean that proof is offered of His quickening and creative operation of the soul in His body -- which god the Word Incarnate preserveth without confusion, as hath been shown. The creative energy createth both quantity and quality in an essence, and the existence of things is contemplated from and in these categories. If the Greek philosophers enumerate ten rational principles in beings, then everything is maintained and comprehended in these [categories].[108] So Christ showed that displayed that energy proper to human nature in as many [categories] as are proper to [that nature]: He filleth essence by making the deficient eyes of the blind man [to see], quality by turning water into wine, and quantity by increasing the loaves of bread. He displayeth the life-giving operation of His humanity in breathing, in speaking, in seeing, in hearing, touching, smelling, eating, drinking, moving His hands, and walking and sleeping and so on and so forth.[109]

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[108] The ten rational principles to which St. Maximus refers are those of Aristotle: state, action, opposition, substance, quality, relation, quantity, place, time, and position.

[109] This is one aspect for St. Maximus of the doctrine of Recapitulation. As the Logos of all logoi, Christ not only undergoes all stages of humanity, but fulfills all the metaphysical categories of Creation as well. In this connection, it is worth noting that for Aristotle, whose metaphysical categories these are, there is an intimate connection between the categories of metaphysics and those of language. This is echoed in St. Maximus, who affirms that Christ as the *Logos* of the Father illumines the true sense not only of the *events* recorded in Holy Scripture, but the very words or *logoi* with which it is written:

189. PYRRHUS: Thou hast shown, reverently, and without doing any violence [to the truth], that the conception of this father doth not contradict, but rather agreeth, with the two energies. But what about that expression of St. Dionysius in the epistle to Gaius the worshipper which saith "some new theandric energy of Christ" active with us?[110]

190. MAXIMUS: This newness, is it a quality, or a quantity?

191. PYRRHUS: A quantity.

192. MAXIMUS: If so, then it introduceth a new kind of nature, since according to every definition of nature, the rational principle of the energy must have the same kind of nature. Moreover, when the divine apostle saith "Behold all things have become new"[111] no one will assert that he meant "all things have become something else" nor doth anyone say that he meant "behold all things are become one." This must be self-determination, regardless of whether thou wishest to call it energy or nature. But if this newness be a qualitative one, then it doth not mean one

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"(The *Logos*) is the center of the universe in the same manner as he is the center of the economy of salvation.... A similar relationship to the powers of salvation is, of course, presupposed also in relation to the *logoi* of Scripture. incarnate in the words and sounds of Scripture, the living Lord must also illuminate their deepest sense, as he did once in his earthly career, revealing the secrets of the Old Testament."(Lars Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator: The Theological Anthropology of Maximus teh Confessor*, p. 83)

110 St. Dionysius, *Epistle 4*, PG 3:1072.

111 II Corinthians 5:17





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energy, [which is a qualitative statement]. Instead, it signifieth both the new and the ineffable mode of the manifestation of the natural operations of Christ by the ineffable manner of the interpenetration of Christ's natures into each other, and that manner of life which was proper to His humanity which, being foreign and miraculous, is unintelligible to natural beings; it indicateth the mode of the exchange of attributes proper to the ineffable union.

193. PYRRHUS: Doth not the term "theandric" indicate one [energy]?

194. MAXIMUS: By no means. Quite the contrary, this expression teacheth the two energies in a round about way by enumerating the natures, since if two existences be negated, there doth not remain some "christic" thing in the middle.[112] But if it doth indicate one energy, then Christ must have one energy, as God, which is different from the Father. If the Son be of a different nature than the Father because the Father's energy is not theandric, then by the same token the nature must be characterized as "theandric". For the energy, being natural, existeth as an innate property and component of nature. Those who comprehend the order of things must say whether this be of the genus "quality" or "quantity".

195. PYRRHUS: Then this newness is neither quantity nor quality, but essence.

196. MAXIMUS: I am astounded that thou canst say this with confidence! What is the opposite of essence?

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112 "christic thing in the middle", i.e., A Eutychian hybrid nature which blends the two natures to form a third, new nature composed of elements mixed together from both. Cf. note 107.

197. PYRRHUS: Non-being.

198. MAXIMUS: And what is the opposite of newness?

199. PYRRHUS: Ancientness.

200. MAXIMUS: Then newness is not an essence but a quality. If we do not interpret this expression of his which referreth to one operation in this way, do we not show this God-revealing teacher to be in opposition to the rest of the Fathers? For all of them distinctly stated and taught that beings of the same energy had the same essence. Likewise, they stated that those which differ in essence differ also in energy, and that those which differ in energy differ in essence as well.

201. PYRRHUS: But the Fathers said this on the level of Theology and not on the level of Economy.[113] Hence, no one who loveth the truth should change the appointed meaning of their statements which refer to Theology into statements that refer to the Economy, and thereby introduce an absurdity.[114]

202. MAXIMUS: If the Fathers say it of the Theology alone, then after the Incarnation it is not possible -- so thou wouldst have us say -- to regard the Son as equally divine as the Father.

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[113] This would seem to explain why Pyrrhus persists in the *literary* spirit of St. Cyril of Alexandria, using *physis* in Theology and Economy differently, whereas St. Maximus, firmly within the Cyrillic Chalcedonian tradition, uses a consistent terminology, where the meanings of hypostasis and nature remain the same, whether referring to Triadology(i.e., Theology) or Christology(i.e., Economy).

[114] Pyrrhus seems to object to the whole enterprise of Cyrillic Chalcedonianism itself, and to its (eventually successful) effort to use technical terms such as hypostasis and nature univocally in both Theology and Economy.





And if it be not possible to regard Him as equally divine, then He hath no place in the invocation [of the Divine Name] at baptism. So both faith and preaching shall, in the last analysis, to be proven to be in vain.

203. And again, if it be not possible to regard the Son as equally divine with the Father after the Incarnation, then [how will these statements be explained]? "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."[115] Or "Whatever the Son seeth the Father doing, the Son doeth likewise"?[116] Or "If ye believe not me, believe my works"?[117] Or "The works which I do bear witness of me"?[118] Or "For as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom He will"?[119] For all these prove that He was not only of the same essence as the Father after the Incarnation, but of the same energy as well.

204. And again, if the foreknowledge of beings be a divine energy, and if it be not only proper to the Father and the Spirit, but further, be also proper to the Son even after the Incarnation, then the Son is of the same energy after the Incarnation as the Father.

205. And again, if the miracles be a divine operation, and if we know from the miracles that He is of the same essence as the Father, then from the same energy He is shown to be of the same essence as the Father, and is to be regarded as equally divine [with Him] after the Incarnation [as He was before it].

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[115] St. John 5:17

[116] St. John 5:19

[117] St. John 10:38

[118] St. John 5:36

[119] St. John 5:21

206. And again, if the creative energy be an attribute proper to the essence of God, then the attributes of the essence are by necessity inseparable. So those who say that after then Incarnation He is not of the same energy as the Father also say that He is not of the same essence, for where the energy proper to a given nature is not found neither shall that nature be found. Conversely, those who say that He is of the same essence say that He is of the same energy as well, and regard Him to be equally divine [with the Father] after the Incarnation [as He was before it]. For wherever the nature is, there also is the energy proper to it, without diminution.

207. PYRRHUS: But we do not say one energy as a denial of human operation. It is said to be passable by opposition to the divine nature.[120]

208. MAXIMUS: Then by the same principle those who say one nature do not say this as a denial of the humanity, but by this means oppose its passable character to the divine nature.

209. PYRRHUS: So? Did not the Fathers define passibility by means of its difference from the divine operation [of impassibility]?

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120 Pyrrhus' argument is dependent upon the Neoplatonic and Plotinian paradigm, which would define all distinctions by means of a dialectical opposition. cf. *Enneads* III:2:16, 17:

"The All is in accordance with its rational formative pattern, and it is necessary that this one formative pattern should be one pattern made out of opposites, since it is opposition of this kind which gives it its structure, and, we might say, its existence....distinction is opposition.... the more it is differentiated the more opposed will it make the things it makes."(trans. A.H. Armstrong, *Loeb Classical Library*, No. 442, p. 99)





210. MAXIMUS: God forbid! For no [father] ever defined an existence by comparison to its opposite or found the one to be the cause of the other. For if human passion is caused in such a manner by the divine energy, then doubtless human imperfection existeth because of the goodness of the divine nature. And the exact opposite may also then be stated: that through the passable human motion the divine energy existeth, and that because the human nature is evil, the divine nature is good. But enough of this! For such [conceptions] are quite perverse.[121]

211. PYRRHUS: Why? Did the Fathers not designate passion as the human motion?

212. MAXIMUS: Yes, but the spoke in various ways about these same propositions and conceptions.

213. PYRRHUS: How canst thou say this?

214 MAXIMUS: They referred to the same thing as power, energy, distinction, motion, property, quality, and passion, but not by opposition to the divine [energy]. Power they defined as that which maintaineth immutability, energy as that which characterizeth the same forms by indistinguishable productions, distinction as that which defineth a thing, motion as that which manifesteth, property as a component attributed only to one thing and not to another, quality as that which imparteth form, and passion as that which is moved. For all things that are from God and after God change by motion, for they are not self-moved beings

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121 Once again, St. Maximus' response is upon the implications of Pyrrhus' Neoplatonic dialectic which underwrites Monotheletism.

of omnipotent power.[122] Therefore, they cannot be defined by opposition, but only by means of the rational principle created and placed into them, which are the established causes in each thing.[123] So [the human] energy is designated at the same time as the divine, for what else can one make of the expression "He operateth in the form of each of the two by the communion of each of the two"? Or "after He continued also for forty days fasting, He hungered, for He granted to nature when He so willed to enact those things proper to it?" Or of those who say either that there is a distinction of energy, or of those who say there are two energies, one, and another one?

215. PYRRHUS: Of a truth, the inquiry into operations hath shown that the one energy of Christ is absurd, however one may speak of it. I ask pardon for myself and my predecessor. We proposed and introduced these absurdities out of much ignorance. But I also implore thee to find a way that the absurd notion may be destroyed and yet the memory of my predecessor secured.

216. MAXIMUS: There is no way to anathematize the heresy and to pass over the person [who promulgated it] in silence.

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[122] That is, created beings are self-moved, but not in the manner of God, with complete omnipotence, independence, and autonomy. In this sense, they are not "autonomous", which would be dualism, nor merely passive automatons in the face of an irresistible divine energy, which would be fatalism, nor are they mere emanations of the divine essence, which would be pantheism. rather, they are "semi-autonomous", i.e., precisely *created*, and therefore a uniquely different *kind* of being, with a different kind of free choice and activity, which nevertheless depend at all times on the divine will for their existence and activity.

[123] That is, the nature of created beings is not defined by dialectical oppositions between them or between God, but by the distinguishing *logoi* in them.





217. PYRRHUS: But if this should be so, then both Sergius and the Council held under my [presidency] would both be rejected.

218. MAXIMUS: I am amazed at how thou hast called it a "council", for it was not held in accordance with conciliar laws and canons, nor as becometh ecclesiastical custom, for no encyclical letter was ever issued with the consent of the Patriarchs, nor a place and time of meeting ever established, nor any accuser introduced, nor epistles or delegates sent to any of the other Patriarchs. Those who were introduced were not the proper members for a council, neither bishops, nor metropolitans, nor Patriarches. So how canst thou call this which distributed scandals and discord throughout the whole world a "council"?

219. PYRRHUS: If there be no other way than this for my salvation [to be accomplished], then I am ready to make every compliance. I ask only one thing, that thou deem me worthy to visit the apostolic graves [in Rome] and to venerate them, and then to see the pope face to face and give him a letter recanting these errors.[124]

220. After these things had been said by Pyrrhus, Maximus and Gregory the Patrician said, "Since thy proposal seemeth good to us, and uniteth the Church, so shall it be." Thus, in this most brilliant city of the Romans, his promise to them hath been fulfilled: one the one hand he hath condemned the impious doctrines of the *Ekthesis*, and on the other hand hath united himself to the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church through the

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[124] Pyrrhus and St. Maximus subsequently travelled to Rome, though not necessarily together, where Pyrrhus did retract his monothelete opinions before the Pope(St. Martin I). However, he subsequently lapsed back into Monotheletism. St. Maximus remained in Rome where he was instrumental in the formal condemnation of Monotheletism by the Roman Church in the Lateran Council of 649, held under Pope St. Martin I.

grace and coopertation of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, to Whom be glory, for ever and ever. Amen.